"…AND I HAVE GOT NEW FRIENDS ALL OVER EUROPE!"

The Experiences of the Participants from the European Diaconal Process:
Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this research was to analyze the experiences of the participants of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe. The main interest was to find out the learning and the experiences of the participants; what new ideas and practices they have learnt and what other insights and knowledge they have gained through the process. Furthermore, the research aimed to find out what the role of the group was in producing new knowledge as well as to reflect the experiences of the participants in the light of the goals of the process.

The target group of the research was the participants and organizing participants of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe. The research was conducted as qualitative research. The data collection method used was an online questionnaire, which combined closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was sent to 25 persons, of which 16 responded. The questionnaire method was chosen because the target group lives all around Europe. Additionally, one of the organizers of the process was interviewed by using a structured interview, in order to obtain more knowledge about the process. The method of content analysis was selected to analyze the responses.

The results of the research indicated that the respondents learnt especially from other contexts, about resources and conviviality. They gained insights and ideas and were able to implement the results of the process to some degree. The process was experienced as encouraging and useful. Getting to know new people and working together was significant. The challenges the respondents experienced were related to language, contents of the process, participation in the process between the workshops and the implementation of the results of the process in their own context. The role of the group was disclosed in the way that respondents seemed to learn especially from other peoples' experiences and points of view. The goals of the process and the experiences of the respondents had quite high degree of correspondence.

Key words: Conviviality, Diaconia, Experience, Participation

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

During the first year of my studies in social services and diaconia, I had a chance to participate in the first workshop of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe in Järvenpää, Finland. Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe is the title of the European Diaconal Process, but in this text I refer to it as the Seeking Conviviality process. After the first workshop, I was motivated by the topics discussed there. I was invited to the two following workshops of the process as well and got to learn many new things about community diaconia and also connect with people active in diaconia.

Having been part of the Seeking Conviviality process myself and experiencing it meaningful, interesting and educational for me, I came up with the idea to connect my thesis with it in some way, also encouraged by one of my teachers. From the basis of my own experiences, I became interested how the others experienced the Seeking Conviviality process.

The aim of this research is to analyze the experiences of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process. The main interest is in the learning and the experiences of the participants; what new ideas or practices they have learnt and what other insights and knowledge they have gained through the process. Furthermore, this research aims to find out what is the role of the group in producing new knowledge and the experiences are reflected with the goals of the Seeking Conviviality process.

The target group of this research is the participants, including the organizing team, of the Seeking Conviviality process. This research can give new perspectives and understanding for the people who have been involved with the Seeking Conviviality process. Furthermore, it may help the organizers of the process to see what can be achieved through this kind of process and help them in the future, if similar kinds of projects will be organized.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Lutheran World Federation and the Seeking Conviviality Process

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is an international communion of 144 churches that share Lutheran tradition. It was founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, to respond together among Lutheran churches to the human suffering after Second World War. Its Communion Office is based in Geneva, Switzerland. Nowadays LWF has members in 79 countries, representing more than 72 million Christians (LWF 2014.) The core vision of LWF is described as follows:

> *Liberated by God's grace, a communion in Christ living and working together for a just, peaceful, and reconciled world (LWF 2014).*

The Assembly of LWF consists of the representatives of the member churches of Lutheran World Federation. The Assembly meets every six to seven years, and it is the most important decision-making body. Their tasks are, for example, to decide the future directions of LWF and share experiences about the issues facing different Lutheran churches. Between the Assemblies, the Council governs the LWF. The Council is elected by the Assembly. The Council consists of 48 persons, who are elected by the Assembly, plus the President, also elected by the Assembly (LWF 2014.)

The Lutheran World Federation is working with its member churches in areas of common interest, such as theology, humanitarian assistance and the different aspects of mission and development work. Inside the Lutheran World Federation there are three different departments for working on the different issues of common interest; the Department for Theology and Public Witness, the Department for Mission and Development and the Department for World Services (LWF, 2014.)

The Department for Mission and Development is running different kinds of regional and global programmes as well as supporting partner churches' projects. According to Lutheran World Federation (2014), the main role of the Department for Mission and Development is to help member churches to answer to the call to do mission in a holistic way. Holistic mission is described as proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, offering diaconal services targeted to the most vulnerable groups as well as advocating for the marginalized (LWF 2014).

The Department for Mission and Development has different programmatic areas. Capacity for Advocacy- program is a part of the Department for Mission and Development. The program is aiming to collaborate with the member churches of LWF to get involved in advocacy and human rights work. The LWF (2014) describes the task of Capacity for Advocacy-program as follows:

> *We work with our member churches to strengthen their ability to speak against violence that is part of the structures of our societies, especially where there is increasing poverty, exclusion and marginalization in communities (LWF 2014).*

The Seeking Conviviality process is under the Capacity for Advocacy-program and the process is funded by the LWF. The Seeking Conviviality process is based in the programmatic decisions taken in the Lutheran World Federation Council, in order to follow up to the LWF Handbook on Diakonia. The Seeking Conviviality process is a follow up to the Handbook entitled "Diakonia in Context", and it is referring to European context. The spelling of the word "diakonia", instead of "diaconia" was introduced in the Handbook "Diakonia in Context", thus in this research the quotations from LWF text use the word "diakonia", but otherwise the words diaconia and diaconal are used.

The participants of the Seeking Conviviality process chose to relate the process to the 500th Reformation Anniversary which is under preparation in the LWF member churches as well as in LWF programs. That is, because the themes

that the LWF Council identified for the Anniversary preparations (Salvation – not for sale, Human beings – not for sale, Creation – not for sale) are connected to the Seeking Conviviality process (LWF Europe Secretary, personal communication 3.10.2014.)

The 500th Reformation Anniversary takes place in 2017, and around the 500th Reformation Anniversary there will be different processes in various regions, related to the theme of the Reformation Anniversary. The theme is 'Liberated by God's Grace' and it offers possibility to reflect issues such as from what and for what the liberation by God's Grace means (Agenda from The Meeting of the LWF Council 2013.) The output of the Seeking Conviviality process intends to bring into conversation and offer conceptual orientation to contextual diaconal development as well as to contribute to the 500th Reformation Anniversary (Addy (ed.) 2013, 4).

2.2 Interdiac and the Seeking Conviviality Process

The organizing partner of the Seeking Conviviality process is interdiac. Interdiac (International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action) is a non-profit educational organization that is located in Český Těšín, Czech Republic. Diaconia and social services are the main subjects in interdiac and the core aims are to promote high quality training and to support life-long learning. Interdiac intends to support research and development projects that aim to strengthen diaconia and social action in Central and Eastern Europe (interdiac 2014.)

Interdiac was founded in 2008 with purpose to promote training and learning in Central and Eastern Europe in the field of diaconia and social services. Answering to the new issues in Central and Eastern Europe, such as poverty, unemployment and violence in families, developing methodological approaches

to learning and international cooperation are the motivations for establishing interdiac. Interdiac builds its programmes in partnership with the organizations that share the interdiac values. Currently, interdiac has 14 partners in 12 different countries (interdiac 2014.)

The Seeking Conviviality process was developed in cooperation between interdiac and LWF. Since the understanding of community diaconia and the participatory approach alongside with the overview of Eastern Europe context that interdiac has, it was invited by the LWF to be the collaborator of the process. Furthermore, interdiac is financially supported by the Department for Mission and Development, and the Department for Mission and Development has a strong commitment to integrate strongly its programs and the member churches projects, for mutual learning. The idea to include grass-root level diaconal practitioners to the process also came from interdiac. Interdiac has also been running an international project in West and Eastern Europe on new directions for voluntary action in diaconia (Tony Addy, personal communication 27.8.2014.)

2.3 European Context as Motivation for the Seeking Conviviality Process

The current context in Europe has produced a need for the process. As explained in the summary of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe (n.d.), the societies and churches are experiencing challenges due to the changing situations, e.g. the global financial crisis, which is affecting the sustainability of many people. Furthermore, the migration within Europe and to Europe are causing challenges, because it seems that many people with migration background are stuck in difficult life situations which are made worse by the effects of economic crisis. Also the challenges of emerging multi-cultural and multi religious neighborhoods are challenging countries and churches. The political and

economic changes are affecting the situation and there is a double trend of apparent secularization, and at the same time the growing importance of religion can be seen (Summary of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe n.d.)

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, there was a motivation for the Seeking Conviviality process. The churches and the people active in diaconia could and still can benefit from the process, where the participants were working to find new ways to practice diaconia, in changed economical and political context.

3 THE SEEKING CONVIVIALITY PROCESS

3.1 The Contents of the Process

The Seeking Conviviality process started in December 2011 with the workshop in Järvenpää, Finland. The workshop gathered together 28 participants, who have their background in diaconal action; pastors, diaconia workers and people who are active in diaconia. The LWF Europe Secretary together with the Manager of interdiac and the Head of Education of interdiac were the coordinating and organizing team of the process.

During the first workshop participants started the process from their own background; what is motivating them for diaconia work, what experiences they have and what is engaging them for diaconia work. From the motivations and experiences the participants formed four themes of diaconia: vocation, conviviality, justice and dignity. These themes were the starting point for the later publication. The themes started to be reflected and developed further. The participants named themselves as 'Solidarity Group' as to express solidarity between them. The Solidarity Group has consisted of approximately 28 participants from some 13 LWF member churches. The members of the Solidarity Group have been mostly the same ones in all of the workshops. Some have not been able to participate to each workshop and some representatives have changed alongside the process.

In May 2012, some of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process took part in LWF's European Church Leadership Consultation, which was held in Ostrava, Czech Republic. In the consultation the participants organized a diaconia workshop day, giving presentations about the experiences from the diaconal field, as well as about the findings of the process, which were made in the first workshop in Järvenpää. The Consultation was a chance to have

dialogue with the church leaders; show the findings from the first workshop but also to receive ideas, insights and feedback from the church leaders (Tony Addy, personal communication 27.8.2014.)

The second workshop took place in Odessa, Ukraine in January 2013. The participants continued working on the coming publication by deepening the understanding of the issues in different contexts and learning from each other. The workshop also included visitations to different diaconal organizations and projects in Odessa. During the workshop, each participant developed their 'personal action plan'. Personal action plans were developed to support the participants to implement the findings of the process in each of their own contexts, and at different levels.

In January 2014, the third workshop was organized in Rummelsberg, near Nuremberg, in Germany. The publication 'Seeking Conviviality - Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe' had been finalized before the workshop, thus there was a chance for celebration and assessing the publication. The publication includes an analysis of the European situation and its effects to vulnerable groups and communities as well as to churches and diaconia. In addition, the publication identifies, from the experiences of the Solidarity Group, the four themes (vocation, conviviality, justice and dignity) for reflection and action when considering nowadays and future community diaconia in Europe. Finally, it includes diaconal strategies for change (Addy (ed.) 2013, 4.)

During the workshop participants planned how they can implement the results of the process so far in their own context, based on the publication. Furthermore, they assessed how their personal action plans had worked out between Odessa and Nuremberg workshop and how they could be implemented in the future. Most of the participants participated in field visits to local diaconal organizations.

Moreover, since the Seeking Conviviality process was agreed to continue for another three years, participants planned the yearly thematic focuses for the years 2014-2016. Three different themes were identified, and small groups who are working on the themes were formed. Those themes were 'Platform Conviviality', 'Convivial Economy' and 'Convivial Theology'.

Between the workshops the participants stayed connected via different electronic communication tools, like e-mails, Skype and Facebook group. Most of the participants were engaged in processing the publication 'Seeking Conviviality-Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe' between the workshops. The contributions were various; the participants were writing parts to the publication itself, many participants gave examples from their own contexts, most of the pictures in the publications were provided by the participants and help was given in structuring the publication. The final editing of the publication was made by a member of organizing participants, the Head of Education from interdiac.

The three workshops held between 2011 and 2014, the LWF European Church Leadership Consultation in 2012 and producing the publication formed the first phase of the Seeking Conviviality process. However, on the basis of renewed mandates for the participants through their delegating churches, the process will continue building up towards the 500th Reformation Anniversary. From now on the work will be done in three small groups, which all have their own theme. The groups have started their work, and two workshops will be organized, in 2015 around the theme 'Convivial Economy' and in 2016 on 'Convivial Theology'. All of the churches are committed to continue the process as well as the participants, even though there may be some changes in different church representatives, mainly due to individual professional or personal changes (Tony Addy, personal communication 27.8.2014). In 2014, new members are joining the Solidarity Group from Russia, Poland and Czech Republic (LWF Europe Secretary, personal communication 3.10.2014).

3.2 Aims of the Process

According to the LWF, the Seeking Conviviality process aims

> *…to develop holistic diaconal responses by LWF member churches to growing poverty and marginalization in Europe (LWF, 2014).*

In the Aide Memoire (2011) of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe the goals of the process are demonstrated through six points;

> 1. *To exemplify the European social realities, from within the marginalizing situation, through the eyes of those who live and work in them.*
>
> 2. *Clarify the models of work and the processes for empowerment and transformation.*
>
> 3. *Develop and introduce strategies for advocacy work with and behalf of both those living in poverty and those from the churches working with them (public strategies towards the churches)*
>
> 4. *Create solidarity among diaconal actors as they work together. This would support longer term strategy building.*
>
> 5. *Make an impact on church and diaconal policies which aim at contributing to change of people's living realities.*
>
> 6. *Create synergies between the diaconal practices in the regional and global context.*
>
> *(Aide Memoire of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe-process 2011)*

What is remarkable in the Seeking Conviviality –process is the fact that most of the participants of the process are engaged in practice level work. As the title of the process indicates, the process aimed to develop and renew community

diaconia. Special interest was put on community diaconia, instead of institutional diaconia. The reason for that is the fact that community diaconia is the fundamental starting point for diaconia (Tony Addy, personal communication 27.8.2014).

Important goal of the process was the aspiration to develop new models for practice, by using the experiences of the participants as resource. Also, learning from each other and receiving new ideas for participants' own work is a goal of the process (Tony Addy, personal communication 27.8.2014.)

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 The Concept of Conviviality

The concept of conviviality is the key concept and programmatic vision of the Seeking Conviviality process (Summary of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe n.d.) thus it is relevant to explain the concept from different points of view. Furthermore, I reflect the experiences of the participants of the process as well in light of the concept of conviviality.

The concept of conviviality has its origins in Spain, during the period from early 8th century until the end of 15th century, where Christians, Jews and Muslims were living together rather peacefully (Summary of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe n.d.). The term conviviality refers to Spanish word 'convivencia', and it can be understood as

> *…living together in solidarity, in sharing resources, and in the joint struggle for human dignity and sustainable community (Addy (ed.) 2013, 4).*

In addition, it refers to the old traditions of neighborhood support, which was promoting living together (Addy (ed.) 2013, 4).

The concept of conviviality was first presented in modern times by Ivan Illich (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18). According to Ivan Illich (1973), the concept of conviviality describes the autonomous and creative relationships between persons and between persons and their environment (Illich 1973, 11).

The publication "Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe" gives a rich picture of the concept of conviviality and how it can be

understood, especially as seen from the point of view of diaconia. In the following I describe the concept of conviviality as explained in the publication "Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe".

At first, it is explained in the publication that diaconia is based on congregational life which is as well community life. Thus, if the main factor for diaconia is the life in community, the understanding of community should promote the openness to the other and openness for diversity (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18.) That is why the concept of conviviality is chosen, because

> *Conviviality refers to the art and practice of living together (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18).*

Furthermore, the three bases of conviviality are described in the publication, as indicating what conviviality is based on:

- *Relational nature of the person, in distinction to a view of the person which is based on possessive individualism,*

- *Respectful views towards people and communities that are 'different',*

- *Reciprocal relationships of give and take between people as foundation for life together (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18.)*

In addition, conviviality promotes companionship and founding of creative relationships between people and recognition of interdependency. It can be seen as an alternative concept to multiculturalism, because of its reference to the interaction and living together in diversity (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18.)

In the publication conviviality is seen as core concept, and the thinking and strategy building of diaconia should be seen through conviviality, as recognizing the importance of building relationships inside the congregation, but as well in wider society, criticizing the individualistic view of person. Conviviality can be an

approach for diaconia, that may also impact on the ways in which the worship can also include marginalized people. Furthermore, the importance of affecting diaconal service is seen in a way, that it could be more 'convivial' by promoting both-way activities in a way, that

> *…all are 'givers and receivers' at different moments (Addy (ed.) 2013, 29).*

In addition, that everyone would have possibility to contribute ideas and actions from their own starting points (Addy (ed.) 2013, 29-30.)

Conviviality can be seen as an approach for strengthening identities and sharing of resources. It can be seen in a way that diaconia advocates for the creation of church communities that are open and welcoming for different people and willing to share resources, no matter if the people are different from the mainstream (Addy (ed.) 2013, 30.)

Conviviality can be seen as well as diaconal service, by organizing such models of service that can include both the 'traditional residents' and also the members of different groups, such as immigrants. That should happen in the way, that they are able to develop and implement their activities together, but also together with different groups. Thus, the service can give a place for the different groups to share and improve their skills (Addy (ed.) 2013, 30.)

To conclude, conviviality can be seen as credible concept of diaconia, if

> *…we really believe that human beings are relational, that caring and service belong to being created in the image of God and that God requires that people live in justice and peace… (Addy (ed.) 2013, 31).*

The concept of conviviality is especially relevant in the Central and Eastern European context, as the history of the area has been shaped by the diversity of the nationalities and changing boundaries of the countries. The diversity

includes different groups as Slavic, Hungarian and Latin language groups, and groups such as Romas as well as Jewish and Germanic groups. Furthermore, the migration inside the area has taken place during the history. There have been also different confessions of Christians in the countries, like Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox Christians. For these reasons, conviviality seemed to be an important concept for grounding work in the region and because of that, by implication, for the process (Tony Addy, personal communication 18.11.2014)

In the Western European countries, migration from Global South and Middle East, the development of the concept of multiculturalism has been relevant. However, even with the recent phenomenon of in-migration, the concept of multiculturalism does not apply so well to the Eastern European situation, which has been always multicultural, and has had very different groups living together. For instance, in one village in Poland, there could be 11 different groups living before the communist time. So, it was relevant to define a concept that would describe that situation (Tony Addy, personal communication 18.11.2014.)

The diversity was hidden during the communist time, and there was not good expression for the situation. After 1989, the diversity became visible in public. Addy (2014), elaborates the point that the visibility of the diversity demanded a concept that would describe how to live together. It was proposed that the demand could be met by the concept of conviviality, which origins refers to the historical period of three different faith groups living together in peace (Tony Addy, personal communication 18.11.2014.)

Additionally, another motivation for the use of the concept of conviviality lies in the fact, that the communist period impaired the trust between people. Addy (2014), says that the trust is based on relationships and thus a diaconal concept that focuses on building of trustful relationships between people and creation of community was needed. Thus, the emphasis was put on the fact that

community should be relational and based on participation, not compulsion. Addy (2014) elaborates that the concept of conviviality was viewed as a response to the need for the new concept (Tony Addy, personal communication 18.11.2014)

Conviviality can be viewed from various perspectives. Nowicka and Vertovec (2014) explain that the term conviviality has been mostly connected to social, friendly and festival characteristics, but nowadays it is used to

> *...convey a deeper concern with the human condition and how we think about human modes of togetherness. (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014, 341-342).*

In addition, Gilroy (2006) sees conviviality as a way of living, in which people with different racial, linguistic and religious characters can live closely, without having problems in communication (Gilroy 2006).

According to Siirto (2014), conviviality can be seen as a diaconal concept which is representing renewed Christian and a way of life oriented by the Gospel, due to the fact that Christ through His resurrection renewed people and their relationships with the neighbors (Siirto 2014). Furthermore, Siirto (2014) links the word solidarity as a perspective for the concept of conviviality. The motivation behind that link is, according to Siirto (2014), that since the meaning of solidarity implies sharing and giving up one's own self-centeredness, then it results in aiming to create improved environment for living together and better world as well as working together for common good. Siirto (2014) also suggests that solidarity

> *…assumes that everyone tries better to understand their own motives and hopes as well as those of others (Siirto 2014).*

And as a result of that, it can help to notice the common understandings and differences and that may help in building of community (Siirto 2014.) The

concept of conviviality has multiple definitions and understandings. In addition, the concept continues to be developed, not only in the LWF project but also in the work of interdiac (Report from interdiac Honorary Council Meeting 2014).

4.2 The Concept of Curriculum

The concept 'curriculum' is most often described as the written plan of what should be taught and how (Innanen 2009, 16). Saylor and Alexander (1974) define curriculum as

> *Curriculum encompasses all learning opportunities provided by the school (Saylor and Alexander 1974, cited in Jackson, 1992, 4).*

Furthermore, Jackson (1992) says that the term curriculum is to include all the experiences and learning opportunities that are offered in the school, not only those ones that are linked to 'formal' teaching such as lecturing (Jackson 1992, 5). The original meaning of curriculum comes from Latin, as representing the words running, journey and progression. According to Innanen (2009), the Latin meaning of curriculum represents the way that teaching should be organized: it is most important how the learner is learning and how the learning situation should be organized in order to achieve the learning (Innanen, 2009, 18.)

The curriculum has different dimensions. In the following I introduce the different dimensions of the curriculum according to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The first dimension is the intended curriculum, which focuses on the aims and content about what shall be taught. It is expressed in curriculum frameworks as well as in the formal documents. In addition, the intended curriculum may have the authority of law. The second dimension of the curriculum, the implemented curriculum, refers to what is actually taught to the learners. The third dimension, the experienced

curriculum, indicates the formal learning that the learners have actually experienced. According to UNESCO (n.d.), the experienced curriculum

> *…is more concerned with the learners, what knowledge and perspectives they bring, their ability to learn and their interaction with the curriculum (UNESCO n.d.).*

The fourth dimension, the hidden curriculum, concerns the learners' experiences of school behind the formal structure of the curriculum. The emphasis is put on the messages concerning values, beliefs, behavior and attitudes which are conveyed by the school or education system (UNESCO n.d. .) In addition, Innanen (2009) says that hidden curriculum is an unaware part of the implemented curriculum, which affects in the teaching situation without being written, spoken or thought. It is usually the result of the values and attitudes of the educator, which have formed through the life course of the educator. It can be conveyed by the educator's choices, tone of the voice, expressions and through other body language (Innanen 2009, 17.) The fifth dimension of the curriculum is the null curriculum. It refers to all of the aspects of human experience which are not specified in the curriculum and not recognized in the teaching (UNESCO n.d.).

The decision to have the curriculum as research orientation is motivated through the interest to look at the Seeking Conviviality process especially as a learning process. As a three-year-process, the Seeking Conviviality process had its goals. The goals of the process could be seen also as a curriculum of the process, as the intended curriculum. The reasoning to consider the goals of the process as the intended curriculum can be recognized from UNESCO's definition for the intended curriculum presented above. The definition explains that the intended curriculum refers to aims and content of what should be learned, as well as it is expressed in the formal documents, in the planning documents of the process. In turn, the experiences of the participants could be seen as experienced curriculum, since it indicates the learning that the learners

have actually experienced. In addition, the experienced curriculum takes into consideration, what knowledge and perspectives the learners bring, their ability to learn and how they interact with the curriculum (UNESCO n.d.) The content and the learning of the process were built from the experiences of the participants'. The emphasis was put on the biography and motivation of the participants', the context of their work and what kind of work they were doing. Thus, the process was built inductively, and even though there were defined goals for project, the concrete learning outcomes have been shaped through the process by the participants.

To study the Seeking Conviviality process as a learning experience gives the possibility to reflect the experiences of the participants in light of the goals of the process. My interest is to see how the experiences are reflecting the goals of the process, which could be also seen as the intended curriculum of the process. Innanen (2009) says that the final result of teaching is always different than what has been in the intended curriculum. Furthermore, he suggests that the division between the intended, the implemented and the experienced curriculum should be done (Innanen 2009, 16-17.) Innanen (2009) explains, that in education settings the aim is, that the intended and the experienced curriculums should be as corresponding as possible (Innanen 2009, 16). The figure below shows the interrelationship between the three curricula; in the left the learning experiences, the experienced curriculum corresponds well to the intended curriculum. In the right, the learners have experienced the teaching in different way than it was expressed in the intended curriculum, and most probably they learnt something else (Innanen 2009, 17).

Good correspondence   Poor correspondance

a b c

a   b   c

a= the intended curriculum

b=the implemented curriculum

c=the experienced curriculum
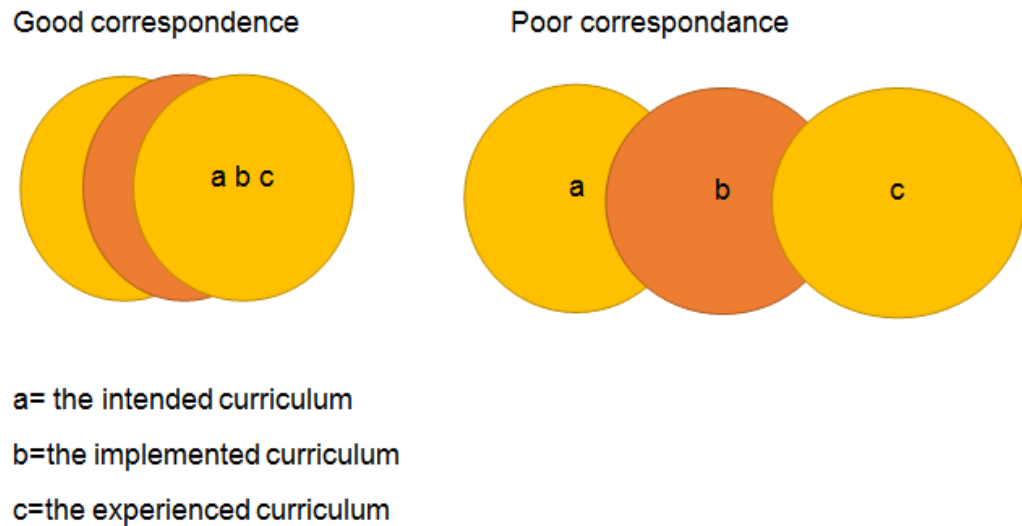
FIGURE 1. The interrelationship between the intended, the implemented and the experienced curriculum (Innanen 2009, 17.)

My intention is not to evaluate the Seeking Conviviality process or the ways it was organized, but to find out the experiences of the participants in the process, and reflect them in light of the goals of the process. The main focus is to find out what kind of experiences the participants have, and in what kind of ways they are corresponding to the goals of the process.

4.3 The Concepts of the Community of Practice and the Innovative Knowledge Community

I chose to utilize the concepts of community of practice and innovative knowledge community as supplementary research orientations in order to explain the role of the group in producing new knowledge and innovations as well as in learning new things. In the following the concepts are described.

The concept of community of practice can be understood as uniting people who have special skills or professionalism in certain area of knowledge, and who are interacting either formally or informally in order to achieve their knowledge-related, common goals (Hakkarainen, Paavola & Lipponen 2003). The starting point for community of practice is the implementation of shared company, project or thing, and of which the members of the community agree together and take mutual responsibility. Participation in a community implies engagement in implementing the shared project (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.) The shared practices are binding together the members of the community of practice; even if a single participant would not interact with all of the participants. Usually, it is expected that there is a more or less conscious effort to take care of the community and to keep the community together. The community of practice produces outputs from shared action, which occurs in a form of artifacts, tools, concepts or stories (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.) According to Wenger (1998), the community of practice represents the jointly found, local means to adapt to the demands and problem situations of the operating environment, by the closely working communities (Wenger 1998, cited in Hakkarainen et al. 2003).

The community of practice is operating in relatively set operation environments, in which the communities and the members of the communities are adapting to some firm and relatively set demands. The community of practice is an unit for cultural learning; it is conveying the cultural traditions to the new participants and developing practices, tools and knowledge, which are embodied with the results of the cultural learning (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.) The community of practice aims to minimize the problems and to find local solutions for the practical problems, which are hindering the achievement of the common goals (Hakkarainen et al. 2003).

The learning in the community of practice takes place usually without conscious effort to teach or lead the processes of growing into the culture and

socialization. The growing into the culture may take place through participating in the practices of the professional. The communities of practice are usually formed spontaneously by combining the common resources in order to answer to some challenge (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.)

The concept of innovative knowledge community has some similarities with the concept of the community of practice. The innovative knowledge community reminds one of informal community of practice, and it is also producing shared action, tools, practices and methods as well as shared stories and understanding. However, there is distinction between these two communities (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.)

The innovative knowledge community operates in changing environment, in which the criteria for successful performance are changing all the time. The innovative knowledge community aims at producing cultural learning, at conveying the cultural traditions for the new participants and developing practices, tools and knowledge, which are embodied with the results of the cultural learning, likewise in the community of practice. However, the whole operation of the innovative knowledge community aims to produce new knowledge and practices that support the new knowledge. It is typical for the innovative knowledge community to utilize the capacity of the social communities to produce new innovations relying on the old ones. Furthermore, collecting and using the former cultural knowledge to produce new knowledge may lead to accelerated cultural learning, which is typical for the innovative knowledge community (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.)

The innovative knowledge communities often face problems that no one from the community has faced before. However, the innovative knowledge communities aim at progressive problem-solution as well as at producing social changes that can produce new knowledge. The operation of the innovative knowledge community is dependent on the development of the individual

member of a community, and often the innovative knowledge community takes collective responsibility of the development of the professionalism of the individual member of community (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.)

The innovative knowledge communities are often formed purposefully to create new knowledge. The members of a community are purposefully and actively producing changes that support the production of new knowledge. The members of the innovative knowledge communities can change according to different projects. The innovative knowledge communities aim to achieve new perspectives, ideas and practices from outside of the community, in order to be formed as practices of the innovative knowledge community (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.)

Sfard (1998) defines two points of view for learning; the knowledge-acquisition point of view and participation point of view (Sfard 1998, cited in Hakkarainen 2000).The participation point of view for learning considers that learning takes place by participating in some action of a meaningful community. From the point of view of participation, the learning is a process of socializing in the community and the growing of the community. In the process, the operation and communication practices of the community are adapted as well as the ways of operating according to the norms of the community. From the participation point of view of learning, the learning is a process, which gives new possibilities for participation for the individual (Hakkarainen 2000.) Furthermore, Hakkarainen (2000) says, that belonging to the community and participating in its operation are remarkable resources for learning (Hakkarainen 2000). According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the learning through participation takes place among the community and is conveyed through the different points of view of the members of the community (Lave and Wenger 1991, cited in Hakkarainen 2000). Acerbi, Marocco and Vogt (2008) elaborate, that the process of learning by interacting with other actors refers to social learning (Acerbi, Marocco and Vogt 2008).

Wenger (1998) proposes that professionalism and know-how are conveyed through communities of practice (Wenger 1998, cited in Hakkarainen 2000). Hakkarainen (2000) says, that high quality know-how and new ideas are conveyed through communities of practice (Hakkarainen 2000). The operation of the community of practice produces different kinds of tools to support the action of the community of practice. The tools for action are produced through the process of reification (according to Wenger 1998, cited in Hakkarainen 2000). Reification is a process that conveys the experiences and ways of operation of the community of practice in a communicable form. The operation of community of practice is shaped by participation and reification (Hakkarainen 2000).

5 METHODOLOGY

The nature of this research is qualitative. According to Hirsijärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2009), the starting point for qualitative research is to describe real life situations. Furthermore, Hirsijärvi et al. (2009) highlight, that qualitative research aim to study its object as comprehensively as possible and the results are bound to certain time and place (Hirsijärvi et al. 2009, 161.) Kumar (2014) says, that qualitative research

> *…emphasizes the description and narration of feelings, perceptions and experiences […] and communicates findings in a descriptive and narrative rather than analytical manner, placing no or less emphasis on generalization (Kumar 2014, 14.)*

This research is qualitative, because it is aiming to describe the experiences from real life situation, the experiences of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process. Furthermore, this study is not aiming to generalize the findings, but rather provide a description of the experiences of this certain group of people.

5.1 Purpose of the Research and Research Environment

The purpose of this research is to analyze the experiences of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process. The main interest is in the learning and the experiences of the participants; what new ideas or practices they have learnt and what other insights and knowledge they have gained through the process. Furthermore, the research aims to find out what is the role of the group in producing new knowledge. In addition, the results are reflected in the light of the goals of the process.

This research can give new perspectives and understanding to the people who have been involved with the Seeking Conviviality process. Furthermore, it may help the organizers of the process to see what can be achieved through this kind of process and help them in the future, if similar kind of process will be organized.

The target group of this research is the participants (including the organizing team) of the Seeking Conviviality process. I wanted to get as holistic as possible view of the learning and experiences of the participants, but also of the organizing team, so I chose to include all of the participants and organizing team into my research.

Because of my interest to include all of the participants and organizing team into the research, I chose to utilize an online questionnaire (see Appendix 2) as a method for gathering the data (the chosen method will be explained more in the sub chapter 5.2). Since the participants and organizing team of the Seeking Conviviality process live all around Europe, it would have been almost impossible to organize face-to-face interviews. As Kumar (2014) also suggests, the advantage of a questionnaire is significant, when the respondents are divided across a wide geographical area (Kumar 2014, 181).

I was also considering the possibility of interviewing some of the participants in the last workshop of the process. However, due to the changes in my personal timetable, I did not interview anyone in the last workshop, but proposed the idea to connect my thesis to the experiences of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process.

5.2 Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods, which I used, were online questionnaire (see Appendix 2) and structured interview. The responses from the online

questionnaire were the main data for the research. I interviewed one of the organizing team members in order to get more information about the process and transcribed the interview.

According to Kumar (2014), a questionnaire is

> *…a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. Thus, respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers (Kumar 2014, 178.)*

In addition, Kumar (2014) explains that a questionnaire can be administered in different ways, depending on the number of the respondents and the impression of the researcher as to how he/she considers the respondents would most likely prefer to participate in the study (Kumar 2014, 179). I chose to conduct an online questionnaire, due to the fact that the participants and organizing team of the Seeking Conviviality process are living in different parts of Europe, therefore an online questionnaire was the most convenient way of attaining data.

The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, of which eight were closed questions and the remaining sixteen were open-ended questions. According to Kumar (2014), the guideline for closed questions and open-ended questions is that closed questions are used to obtain factual information; in turn the open ended-questions are used to receive information about opinions, attitudes and perceptions (Kumar 2014, 185). The sixteen open-ended questions produced the qualitative data of the research and by closed questions I wanted to obtain some information about the backgrounds of the respondents.

The questionnaire was carried out using Webropol. Webropol is online survey software. At first, I was thinking to prepare a Word-document which would include the questionnaire, and which I would have sent for the participants. However, I received advice from my thesis supervisor, that Webropol could be more useful. That is why I carried out the questionnaire in Webropol. I prepared

the questionnaire in cooperation with one of the organizers of the process and one person who was familiar with the process. I also received support from my thesis supervisor while preparing the questionnaire.

I sent the invitation to complete the questionnaire for 25 participants, including the organizing team via e-mail. The e-mail addresses I had acquired from the LWF Europe Secretary. I could not send the invitation to all of the participants, because I did not have access to all of the e-mail addresses, for example, one of the e-mail addresses was not in use anymore. However, most of the participants were included.

The invitation e-mail included cover letter of the research (see Appendix 1) and link to the Webropol questionnaire. I sent the invitation e-mail on 5.5.2014 and indicated the wish that participants should answer until 15.5.2014. When the date 15.5.2014 was reached, I was considering the number of the responses and decided to prolong the time for answering until 23.5.2014 in order to obtain more responses. All in all, I received responses from 16 persons out of 25.

I was quite content about the amount of the responses, since Kumar (2014), says, that disadvantage of questionnaire might be the low response rate (Kumar 2014, 182). However, the response rate in my research was 64% (16 responses out of 25). In the early stage of the research I had also considered carrying out some interviews via Skype with some of the participants from the basis of the responses. However, I decided not to conduct Skype-interviews, because I had the impression that I had enough data from the responses of the questionnaire.

Kumar (2014), says that disadvantage of questionnaire can be the lack of possibility to clarify the issues related to the questions, which means that if the respondent does not understand the question, it is challenging to get the meaning of the question clarified without contacting researcher (Kumar 2014, 182). When going through the responses, I noticed the above-mentioned

disadvantage took place in this questionnaire at some degree. Because, there were few mentions that a respondent indicated not understanding the question. The reason might be that some of the questions might not been so well-formulated or understandable. Another reason might be the English language used in the questionnaire, which may have caused challenges to the understanding of some of the questions. In addition, if it had been interview situation, the researcher could have explained the question.

According to Kumar (2014), an interview is

> *…a commonly used method for collecting information from people… it is essentially a person-to-person interaction, either face to face or otherwise, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind (Kumar 2014, 176.)*

After going through the online questionnaire, I noticed that I might need some more information about the different aspects of the Seeking Conviviality process. I reckoned that it could be beneficial to interview someone of the organizing members of the Seeking Conviviality process. Before conducting the interview, I was in contact with one of the organizing member, asking if it could be possible to conduct interview. Then the interview was agreed.

The interview was conducted as a structured interview. Kumar (2014) describes that in a structured interview the researcher is asking questions that have been formed beforehand (Kumar 2014, 178). In this structured interview I had formed eight questions that I asked during the interview situation. The questions were handling the different aspects of the process, of which I was hoping to get more understanding and information. The interview was conducted in autumn 2014 in Helsinki. It was recorded and transcribed. After transcribing the interview, I sent it to the interviewee, so that the interviewee could go through it.

Kumar (2014) says the advantage of interview is that it is convenient for attaining in-depth information (Kumar 2014, 182). The interview turned out to be convenient for my research, since I got more understanding about the process.

5.3 Content Analysis

The research data of this research is analyzed by utilizing content analysis. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) say content analysis is a basic method for analysis, which can be used in all the qualitative research traditions (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009, 91). The basic framework for content analysis can be divided into four stages; firstly the decision has to be made, what is the phenomenon that is analyzed from the data, second step is going through the data and marking those parts of the data that are relevant for the research and to gather them together separately from the rest of the data. The third step includes classifying, thematizing or typifying the data and finally, writing summary of the chosen data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009, 92-93.)

The data of the research describes the phenomenon which is being researched, and the meaning of the analysis is to create verbal and clear description of the phenomenon which is being researched. The content analysis is aiming to organize the data into compact and clear form, but not losing the information. Furthermore, the content analysis aims to create clarity to the data, so that it is possible to make clear and reliable conclusions from the phenomenon which is being researched (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 108.)

In this research when I started to analyze the responses of the questionnaire, I firstly started to go through the responses by bringing all the different responses under each questions. I marked the similarities and differences from the responses of each question. I also decided my research question, for having basis what are the relevant part of the data for my research. Schreier (2012)

says that qualitative content analysis should be inductive, so that the categories emerge from the data, not based on the theory (Schreier 2012, 25). Based on the statement of Schreier, I started to categorize the responses and the categories were formed from the questionnaire's questions, but some overlapping between the questions was happening (e.g. I could identify learning experiences from both the 8. and 9. question, even the 8. question was inquiring what did the participants learn from the process and 9. question was inquiring what was most important in taking part to the process).

After categorizing the responses, I prepared Excel-chart. I brought the responses to the chart and divided them according to their categories and sub-categories. Based on the categories and sub-categories, I conducted the main analysis of the material. The final stage was to interpret the results and present the findings in the thesis. In the results part, I used straight quotations from the questionnaires' responses, in order to increase the reliability of the analysis. After completing the thesis process, all the questionnaire data will be destroyed, so that the confidentiality of the respondents will be secured.

5.4 Reliability and Ethical Considerations

Since qualitative researches are often bound to certain time, place and group of people, they are unique and thus the traditional ways of assessing the reliability (e.g. the results of the research can be repeated and the outcome will be the same) is most often not possible while conducting qualitative research (Hirsijärvi et al. 2009, 231-232). However, it is necessary to assess the reliability of the research in some way.

Hirsijärvi et al. (2009) say that accurate description of the implementation of the research increases the reliability of the qualitative research (Hirsijärvi et al. 2009, 232). It is advisable to give descriptions of all of the phases of the

research and how the material was conducted. Furthermore, as it is central in the qualitative analysis to classify the material, the reasons for different classifications should be given. In addition, when the results are interpreted, the researcher should give reasoning for different interpretations. The quotations from the interviews or questionnaires may complement for the interpretations (Hirsijärvi et al. 2009, 232-233.)

While conducting this research, I have aimed to give descriptions of each phase of the research. I have described how the data was gathered as well as how the content analysis was conducted. In the results part, I have used straight quotations from the questionnaire to reason the different interpretations.

The ethical considerations must be considered when conducting a research. Kumar (2014) highlights the importance of having the consent to participate to the research from the participants. This means, that the participants should be informed about what kind information is needed from them, why the information is needed, for what purpose the information is being used and which way they are expected to participate to the study (Kumar 2014, 285.)

Kumar (2014) emphasizes the significance of maintaining confidentiality during the research. The protection of the identity of the participants should be maintained during the whole research process. Even if the identification of the target group of the research is necessary in order to set the findings into context, the identity of the individual participant should be remained anonymous (Kumar 2014, 286.)

While implementing this research, I had to take into account the ethical considerations. Before starting the research process, I was in contact with the organizer participants of the Seeking Conviviality process, in order to know if it is appropriate to research the experiences of the participants of the process.

In the last workshop of the first phase of the Seeking Conviviality process, I introduced the idea to relate my thesis for the Seeking Conviviality process, and especially to the experiences of the participants. Bell (1999) also says, that it should be mentioned to the participants of the research, if the research is done in connection with a diploma or degree course (Bell 1999, 37). At that time, I also presented my thesis proposal so that the participants would have some idea what kind of research I am planning to implement. When I started the research process and sent the invitation e-mail to participate to the research, I included to the invitation e-mail a cover letter (see Appendix 1.) in which I explained for which reasons I am conducting the research, how the responses of the questionnaire will be used in the research, and that in addition to the responding to the questionnaire, there is possibility to take part into Skype-interview, if one is willing. The above-mentioned procedures were related to the consent from the participants to take part to the research, as explained by Kumar (2014).

The question of anonymity is also needed to take into consideration while conducting the research. Thus I emphasized in the cover letter, that the anonymity of the research participants will remain, and that the participants have right to withdraw from the research at any stage. Furthermore, as previously referred to Kumar's (2014) example of identifying the target group of the research, in this research the target group is also identified but the anonymity of individual respondents is protected by not stating revealing information about their identity in any stage of the research.

Bell (1999) explains the concept 'inside' researcher as a researcher who is part of the community or the group of the people one is researching on. The inside researcher usually has

> *…an intimate knowledge of the context of the research and of the micropolitics of the institution (Bell 1999, 43).*

Furthermore, Bell (1999) suggests that inside researcher is often able easily to reach the participants of the research (Bell 1999, 43). In turn, the disadvantage of being inside researcher may appear as a difficulty to remain objective due to the near contact with the community or the group (Bell 1999, 43).

In this research I consider myself partly as 'inside' researcher, since I have been part of the Seeking Conviviality process as a participant, as a member of Solidarity Group. I have been taking part to all of the workshops and I know all of the participants of the process. I had to take into consideration, that my own experiences could affect to the way I look at the responses and the way I analyze the responses. That is why I had to especially try to remain objective, so that I would not be biased because my own role as participant in the process. On the other hand, I experienced my role also as an advantage, because it was easier for me to approach the target group and invite them to take part to the research, because I already knew them.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Background Information

The responses from the questionnaire were analyzed by utilizing content analysis. The main interest was to find out the experiences of the participants of the process. Through the content analysis of the responses I identified four categories of experiences which are related to learning, insights and ideas, group and challenges. Each category also has sub-categories. The categories were mostly formed on the basis of the questions, but some overlapping between the questions was also observed (see 5.3).

In the analysis, I use quotations from the returned questionnaires to demonstrate the respondents' perspectives. I did not put identifications after the quotations, so that the anonymity of the respondents would remain. Since they are straight quotations, I have not changed anything, except where there has been such misspelling which might hinder the reader to understand the quotation. Furthermore, I have faded some revealing words that could identify the respondent, e.g. country names, and replaced them. The replacements will be notified in the quotations.

The questionnaire was responded by sixteen respondents. Fourteen of the respondents took part in the Järvenpää workshop, twelve took part in the Odessa workshop and fourteen took part in the Nuremberg workshop. Four of the respondents are from Northern Europe, eight of the respondents are from Central Eastern Europe and the remaining four are from Central Western Europe.

6.2 Experiences Related to Learning

The first category which I identified is the experiences related to learning. Most of the responses related to learning could be identified from the questionnaire's question: "What did you learn from working in the cross-national multicultural context of Seeking Conviviality process?". Nevertheless, such responses were also identified from responses to other questions. All in all, I could identify 32 expressions that were related to learning.

Many of the respondents indicated that they had learnt from and about different contexts than their own. The actual learning was not always indicated in the responses. However, many respondents seemed to gain learning experience through other participants, from hearing about other contexts, how the work is done in other countries. Such learning from other contexts is described by one of the respondents as follows:

> *"I learned from the rich experience of the other colleagues. Sharing and learning from each others work, context and understanding of Diaconia.."*

For one of the respondents, other participants' experiences and findings gave possibility to reflect on their own work. Learning from other context was described for example in a way that the experiences from people working under economically poorer circumstances were teaching as well as the realization how varied the diaconal work is in Europe and how diaconia can help in many different ways.

> *"I've learnt so much from people working under economically poorer circumstances - and how to use the resources God has given us."*

> *"How varied and important the diaconia work is around the Europe, and how multiple ways it can help.."*

Two of the respondents highlighted, that especially Eastern European countries experiences were important in learning; one of them described it as follows:

> *"Other countries especially eastern European countries their diakonal experience and challenges. Most significant is the learning of the Ukrainian context, which was on the brink of further unrest when we met there and how it affected the mission of diakonal work there..."*

Furthermore, some of the respondents told that the field visits to different organizations were helpful in order to understand the different contexts and ways to work. For one of the respondents, the reflection on the past seemed to be learning experience:

> *"I learned about re-establishing your self-esteem and reflecting what I did before which helped to think what I will do in the future."*

The respondents seemed to learn also about the differences between the European countries. One of the respondents highlighted the learning of differences between the welfare cultures and different roles of the church in society in different European countries. Again, another respondent learnt about the differences between the countries but also that there are similarities in different countries which was described as follows:

> *"I learnt about different realities in different part of Europe. I also recognize that there is similar issues, too."*

This view of different realities but similar issues was supported by other respondents as well, one of them noticed the combining factors of diaconia for the different participants

> *"I learned that despite of different context and realities the fundament for diaconal work is all the same for all of us."*

There was one distinctive response about lack in learning, as elaborated by one of the respondents:

> *"We still have not fulfilled one of the initial aims of the process, that is to learn also about news ways of diaconia in lutheran churches from other parts of the world. That is one thing I would like to know more about."*

To conclude, according to the responses the learning from and about different contexts seemed to be strongly emphasized and having significance in the learning experiences. In addition, it seems that learning the fact, that even though the participants in the process came from various contexts and realities, they share the same idea of diaconal action. However, one of the respondents expressed a lack in learning.

The respondents seemed to learn about resources. One of the respondents reported to have learnt that more funds in diaconia does not always mean that more gets done. This view was supported by other respondents who had learnt how diaconia can influence with fewer resources:

> *"I learnt about how diaconia can influence: "less can be more" for example in terms of resources.."*

> *"I found that the idea of the diaconal parish is not a question of money, but the natural restoration of the church community[…] The reward for all the working community that carefully considers the needs of supported persons with minimum cost, but with the strength of the relationship.."*

To conclude, the achievement in diaconia is more dependent on the effective use of resources than the amount of resources.

The concept of conviviality is the key concept and programmatic vision of the Seeking Conviviality –process. From the responses it can be seen, that learning about the concept of conviviality –what it is and how it can be used in diaconia

is experienced as a learning experience. One of the respondents describes the learning about conviviality as follows:

> *"I also learnt a great deal about conviviality and its meaning and how it is possible to use in diaconia context…I also think that the concept of conviviality is something which give new perspective(s) to diaconia and its practice."*

Furthermore, another respondent emphasized the meaningfulness of defining conviviality and its relevance to churches. The learning about the concept of conviviality was not mentioned so many times.

6.3 Experiences Related to Insights, Ideas and Implementations

According to the responses of the questionnaire, most of the respondents could benefit somehow from the Seeking Conviviality –process. For instance, they got new insights for their own working context, were able to use the document written during the process and felt that the process was meaningful and has encouraged them. Furthermore, the implementation of the personal action plan has been possible in some degree for most of the respondents.

Many of the responses indicated that the respondents have been able to implement the results of the process in their own context. Initiatives such as setting up a working group on community and organizational development was mentioned; in addition some of the respondents said that they have been able to use the concept of conviviality in their working context. One of the respondents reported that they were able to use the method "retreat on the streets" in their own parish. In addition, one of the respondents had informed other church actors about the process:

> *"Yes, I had a meeting with the administrative leaders of my church and will soon have a meeting with our bishops."*

During the Seeking Conviviality process, the participants and organizing participants produced, in cooperation, the publication "Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe". Some of the respondents mentioned, that they have shared the publication with their colleagues

"Yes I have shared the elaborated thesis with my team."

The process seems to have inspired one of the respondents to encourage parishes to cooperate with local governments, as indicated by the following quote:

"And we started roundtables on the local level for encouraging parishes work more closely with local governments for common good."

Few respondents told that they have been able to benefit from the process in their own context, but did not describe more clearly what that has been

"I got new visions, was inspired to do some things in our context."

All in all, many of the respondents seem to be able to implement some results of the process in their own context. However, one respondent indicated as having not been able to bring so many ideas to their own context.

Most of the respondents indicated that they have been able to implement their personal action plans in some way. Many of the respondents expressed that part of their personal action plan has been to inform different parties about the Seeking Conviviality –process. Based on the responses, the information about the process has been distributed to respondents' parishes and workers of the parishes, to different organizations, respondents' networks, different churches and also to the Church Council level.

"I brought the idea to the Church Council level (top decision making body). The bishop is aware of the development and so are the church leaders."

"I contact to Church Council members and tell them about the process…I also inform my colleagues about the process."

Respondents expressed that they have shared the outcome document of the process for different parties, such as educational institutions and that the material has been utilized in their working context. Two of the respondents also brought up, that the material will be utilized in their contexts when it is translated to relevant languages of their country.

"I conveyed the information about our process and the contents of the outcome document in our parish."

"As soon as the material will be available in […] we can use it in our local and national context. It will be used ecumenical for discussion, education etc."

Furthermore, respondents described how they have been organizing or participating in different kinds of projects, training courses and seminars as well as writing articles about the Seeking Conviviality process. In addition, some of the respondents have been connected to different activities regarding the second phase of the Seeking Conviviality process, such as contributing to the thematic groups.

"In the regional work I organized a training course for diaconal workers from the congregations in the region, and participated at two regional conferences about diaconia with my inputs. On the national level I still have work to do and help to distribute our publication [...] Internationally I informed the members of our […] network about our work."

Many of the respondents seemed to get some ideas and insights for their working context or for themselves. Information about different countries or organization context seemed to be also important gain. Three of the

respondents described that they have gained information and insights of the different contexts:

"…having insights in diaconal work in other countries."

"First hand information about social work in other countries."

One of them also emphasized gaining an insight into the consequences of the economic crisis in Europe and how it is affecting people in general. Some of the respondents described different ideas they could take back to their own working context:

"Definitely: the importance of involving more people / empowerment…"

"Many separate things yes, but voluntary work and hospitality as big entireties"

"The question of motivation and spirituality. How to handle problems in a low budget situation. Cooperation between professionals and volunteers."

To conclude, the ideas and insights the respondents could use in their own contexts were varied. The information about other contexts was mentioned and the emphasis was put on having the insights and information about diaconal work and social work in other countries. The respondents expressed that they gained ideas about different issues, such as consequences of economic crisis, importance of voluntary work and how to manage with low budget situation.

Based on the responses, many of the respondents experienced the process encouraging and useful. Participating in the Seeking Conviviality process has encouraged some of the respondents in different ways. One of the respondents describes the possibility to take part in the process as raising professional self-esteem. Another respondent highlighted that Eastern European view point was also considered during the process.

"Sure this kind of possibility raises professional self-esteem. Great, that a diaconia worker from small parish, from country side, was taken along."

"[…] and having the impression that the voice of Eastern Europe is equally heard."

One of the respondents indicated, that the process was also an encouragement to develop diaconal work; the respondent described this as follows:

"For me it was a confirmation to develop diaconal work in the congregations because in my view it is the most sustainable way in times of crisis and lack of resources."

Some of the respondents expressed the view that Seeking Conviviality process has been meaningful for them.

"Very useful and interesting."

"I very much appreciate these workshops and work of this group of people in general."

One of the respondents also experienced the process very useful, but also expressed concern about the problem of the time scale of the process, but wishes it to continue.

"Absolutely great for me personally. But it's still hard to see the outcome of it in a huge organization as […]"

Above, one of the respondents experienced the process as personally meaningful but finds it hard to visualize the concrete outcome in own context.

6.4 Experiences Related to the Group

The significance of other participants and the working group was mentioned often in the responses, so I chose to highlight it as a category as well. From the

responses it can be seen, that the other participants and the working community during the process was important for the respondents.

According to the responses, most of the respondents experienced that it was important and meaningful to get to know new people around the whole of Europe.

> *"…and I've got new friends all over Europe!"*

> *"Getting to know lovely, different, wise people!"*

One of the respondents emphasized, that it was a very important part of the Seeking Conviviality process to get to know new people. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted the importance of getting contacts with new people. One of the participants described it in this way:

> *"Meeting and connecting with people working in the field of Diaconia from different parts of Europe…"*

One of the respondents also described the feeling of fellowship and that the new relationships were encouraging. All in all, the respondents mainly expressed very positive comments about the other participants

> *"It is a great experience to be together with so many interesting people!"*

Many of the respondents experienced working together as an important and meaningful part of the process. Some of the respondents also described how working together with different people can give more content to the process, this was expressed by one of the respondents as follows:

> *"The experience, that all together can bring in a lot of background."*

Furthermore, one of the respondents emphasized how remarkable it is, that so many people from different backgrounds have been and still are able to commit themselves to the Seeking Conviviality process. Some of the respondents also wished that the group would stay in connect, even as the process is now continuing in small groups.

> *"Contact time to time. It would be nice to know what other groups have done while we have done our own task."*

Most of the expressions related to the group were very positive, and emphasis was put on the importance of getting to know new people, and creating connections and networks. Working together was seen useful. In contrast, one of the respondents experienced that there were very few Western European representatives in the process.

6.5 Experiences Related to Challenges

The respondents seemed to experience some challenges during the process. The challenges were mostly related to the language, contents of the process, implementation of the results of the process as well as doing the in-between-assignments between the different workshops.

As the participants of the Seeking Conviviality process come right across Europe, they have various different native languages. The working language during the process was English, and for the most of the participants, English is not their native language. One of the respondents described the challenges related to language as follows:

> *"At the beginning of every workshop it felt tough to switch the language into English and at the end of the workshop when I was already little bit tired, working again in foreign language felt tough. "*

Another respondent was also indicating that one of the challenges of the process was to speak and write in English.

Some of the respondents described having challenges related to the contents of the process. The challenges related to the contents of the process occurred for instance as experiencing some of the discussions or contents difficult to understand or abstract.

> *"Sometimes I had feelings that we were talking about different things, very abstract conversation, so I was confused...."*

> *"Especially in Germany the contents of the last workshop days were very difficult "to process". Also, the full-day work and working the written material and handling the whole process felt sometimes quite tough."*

One of the respondents experienced having challenges to connect own ideas with other members of the group. Moreover, another respondent expressed feeling that they were expected to comment some issues which they are not professional. Two of the respondents described how, at the beginning of the process, it was unclear what the task was, one of them describing the experience as follows:

> *"It would have been good to understand more from the beginning. It was hard to navigate and I had the feeling that there was an agenda I didn't know anything about in the beginning. "*

During the Seeking Conviviality process, between the workshops, many of the participants were contributing to the project different ways, such as writing the publication or preparing for the Church Leadership Consultation. Most of the contributions between the workshops were discussed and shared via e-mail and Skype and using other IT-tools. One of the respondents described how cooperation via Skype and e-mail was challenging.

> *"To cooperate via Skype and mail is a real challenge!"*

Two of the respondents expressed the view that having time to do the tasks between the workshops was challenging.

> *"To find enough time to do in-between-period's tasks. The tasks were very useful, but it was quite challenging to find enough time for them. Somehow I think we should have thought even more than we did, how to put these ideas as a normal part of our daily work."*

As one the respondent indicates that the tasks were useful, but also it was additional work to their own work, as it is expressed by another respondent:

> *"The time contribution and meeting the deadlines, doing the practical work in addition to my normal work."*

Some of the respondents described having challenges to implement the results of the process in their own context:

> *"Another challenge: to write articles here in […] and try to engage others in our project. That's a real challenge!"*

One of the respondents expressed that even if the results are being implemented, it may take long time:

> *"To implement the results into my local context. That's going on and needs perhaps some years."*

To conclude, some of the respondents have challenges to implement the results of the process in their own context, and that the implementation may take long time.

7 REFLECTING THE RESULTS AND THE THEORIES

7.1 Reflecting the Results with the Concept of Conviviality

Since conviviality is the key concept and programmatic vision of the Seeking Conviviality process (Summary of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe n.d.), it is meaningful to reflect some of the results with the concept of conviviality.

As it is stated in the results, learning to use the concept of conviviality was seen to be an important part of the Seeking Conviviality process. The meaningfulness of defining the concept and exploring its relevance to the churches was also emphasized. The concept of conviviality is relatively new to the context of diaconia, which probably affected the view that some of the respondents found it meaningful to work on the definition. Furthermore, the concept is still developing (Report from interdiac Honorary Council Meeting 2014).

As many of the respondents highlighted, it was important to learn about resources; how 'less can be more'. Also, learning about economically poorer circumstances was reported to be helpful for some of the participants. This learning can be linked to conviviality as well. That is, because from the point of view of the diaconal concept, conviviality is seen as an approach for strengthening identities and sharing of resources. That can be seen in the way that diaconia advocates for the creation of church communities which are open and welcoming for different people and willing to share resources, no matter if the people are different than the mainstream (Addy (ed.) 2013, 30.) So, based on that, the learning about resources could be linked to conviviality as well.

From the point of view that conviviality also refers to living together in solidarity and to sharing of resources as well as to the joint struggle for human dignity and sustainable community (Addy (ed.) 2013, 4), the concept supports the learning

which was described incisively by one the respondents, that parishes should more rely on strength of relationships than on money. This view could be linked to conviviality and solidarity as well.

The experiences related to insights and ideas can be linked to conviviality. Some of the respondents described the fact that they have gained ideas about voluntary work and about the cooperation between volunteers and professionals, involving more people in diaconia, hospitality and motivation and spirituality, which can be useful in their own context. Similarly, conviviality is about promoting companionship between people and recognition of interdependency (Addy (ed.) 2013, 18). Thus, the cooperation between professionals and volunteers and service users points, all in all, to the willingness to include more people in diaconia that could be seen as promoting companionship between people. Especially, the cooperation between professionals and volunteers can be seen as interdependency; both parties need each other for common good.

To conclude, some of the respondents have found it meaningful to learn to use the concept of conviviality as well as to develop the meaning of the concept. Furthermore, the ideas related to conviviality can be seen from the responses, especially from the learning about resources, and ideas about the importance of voluntary work, cooperation between volunteers and professionals and service users as well as the importance of engaging more people in diaconia.

7.2 Reflecting the Results with the Curriculum Theory

The theories of curriculum are presented in the sub chapter 4.2. In the sub chapter 4.2, I give arguments on why the goals of the process can be viewed as intended curriculum and the experiences of the respondents as experienced curriculum. The goals of the process were demonstrated through six points. The

first goal was to exemplify the European social realities, from the marginalizing situation, through the eyes of those who live and work in them. The second goal was to clarify the models of work and the processes for empowerment and transformation. The third goal was to develop and introduce strategies for advocacy work with and behalf of both those living in poverty and those from the churches working with them, as public strategies towards the churches. The fourth goal was to create solidarity among diaconal actors as they work together, which would support longer term strategy building. The fifth goal was to make an impact on church and diaconal policies which aim at contributing to change of people's living realities. The sixth goal was to create synergies between the diaconal practices in the regional and global context (Aide Memoire of the European Diaconal Process: Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe-process 2011.)

In addition, one of the organizers of the process also brought up the idea that an important goal of the process was the aspiration to develop new models for practice, by using the experiences of the participants as resource. Also, learning from each other and receiving new ideas for participants' own work is a goal of the process.

The first goal and the experiences of the respondents are corresponding well. This can be seen, since most of the respondents described that they have learnt something from other participants' contexts and experiences as well as from hearing about the different realities in Europe. From the basis of the responses, especially hearing the Eastern European situations has been remarkable for some of the respondents. One of the respondents highlighted, that especially the Ukrainian workshop was important for learning from other contexts. Also, field visits to different organizations were mentioned as helpful, which may have also helped in order to gain examples from different European realities.

The experiences related to second and third goal were more challenging to identify from the results. This might be because of the limitations of the questionnaire, or that the respondents emphasized some other experiences more. However, the second goal has partial correspondence with the results. This can be seen when the respondents describe about the sharing of experiences, concerning what kind of methods of work are used in different contexts.

Again, the second and third goal can be seen from the publication, which has been produced collectively by the participants. To substantiate this, it can be seen that the publication includes points towards diaconal strategies for change as well as examples from the ways of working, introduction to the contexts and stories from different churches and organizations. Nevertheless, the partial correspondence can be explained from the fact, that the experiences related to those goals were not that visible in the responses.

The fourth goal corresponds with the experiences of the respondents. Many of them emphasized the meaningfulness and importance of getting to know new people, gaining contacts and working together. Furthermore, the creation of solidarity can be seen from one of the responses, in which the respondent describes the feeling of fellowship towards other participants. In addition, some of the respondents wished to stay in contact with the group as the second phase of the process will continue the work in small groups.

There is partial correspondence between the fifth goal and the experiences of the respondents. This is reflected in the fact that some of the respondents reported, that they have been in contact with the decision makers of their church. One of the respondents had been encouraging the parishes to cooperate with local governments. However, some of the respondents describe how difficult it is to see the outcome of the process in their own context, or explain that the implementation of the results may take long time.

The sixth goal partly corresponds with the experiences of the participants. That can be seen as some of the respondents explained that they have distributed information about the Seeking Conviviality process and its results to different parties, such as respondents' parishes and workers of the parishes and different organizations, respondents' networks, different churches and Church Council. Furthermore, some of the respondents indicated that they have been organizing or participating in different kinds of projects, training workshops and seminars. However, these actions are happening more on the national level, inside respondents' countries rather than globally, which explains the partial correspondence. On the other hand, many of the respondents are continuing to the second phase of the process, which is contributing to the 500th Reformation Anniversary, which is global. Also, one of the respondents reported having shared the results of the process in an international network.

The goal of learning from each other and receiving new ideas for participants' own work corresponds well with the experiences of the respondents, as the respondents have emphasized the experience of learning from other contexts and hearing about the different situations in different parts of the Europe and experiences of the other participants.

It can be stated, that the correspondence between the goals and the experiences is quite high. Some of the goals are not so clearly visible from the experiences, in turn, the learning from other contexts is emphasized in the experiences, as well as gaining new contacts and networks. It might be that sometimes the goals are quite high, and the experiences are corresponding in a more generalized way than how they are expressed in the goals. In addition, it would seem that the goals could have been presented more clearly at the beginning of the process, since two of the respondents highlighted, that it could have been good to understand more about the process at the beginning. On the other hand, since the content of the process, as well as the outcomes and the

strategy developed workshop by workshop, it could not have been even possible to define everything from the beginning.

7.3 Reflecting the Results with the Theory of Community of Practice and Innovative Knowledge Community

The group of participants of the Seeking Conviviality process has some characteristics of community of practice and innovative knowledge community. To support this statement, it can be seen that a community of practice and an innovative knowledge community are characterized as a group of people who have special skills or professionalism in a certain area of knowledge and who interact, formally or informally, in order to achieve their knowledge-related common goals (Hakkarainen et al. 2003). The group of participants in the Seeking Conviviality process comprises people who have knowledge and skills about diaconia and are gathered together because of the process.

The community of practice and innovative knowledge community implement a shared company, project or issue, and for which the members of the community take mutual responsibility. In addition, the community of practice and innovative knowledge community produce 'equipment' from shared action, which take the form of artifacts, tools, concepts or stories (Hakkarainen et al. 2003.) Taking mutual responsibility for the Seeking Conviviality process can be seen in the example of contributing to the processing of the outcome document, or organizing the Diaconia Day for the LWF's European Church Leader's Meeting. Furthermore, the outcome document can be seen as an output of shared action, as an artifact. As described by Hakkarainen et al. (2003), the output of shared action can be also a concept. Based on the responses, the concept of conviviality was given some meaning during the process.

The experiences of the respondents seem to resonate with Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Hakkarainen's (2000) theory of learning from participation. Many of the respondents described the experience that they had learnt something from other participants; from their context and how diaconia work is done in other countries.

Furthermore, most of the respondents experienced how it was important and meaningful to get to know new people around the Europe as well as work together with people with different backgrounds. Hakkarainen (2000) also states, that learning takes place when a person participates to some action of meaningful community.

As Lave and Wenger (1991) state, learning through participation takes place among the community and is conveyed through the different points of view of the members of the community. This view is also supported by the results, as many of the respondents reported learning and receiving new ideas and insights, when hearing from other participants' contexts, ways of working and understanding of diaconia.

Thus, it can be concluded, that this kind of process, which brings together people with different backgrounds, may support the view of learning through participation and especially learning from other peoples' experiences and point of views. Furthermore, the theory of Hakkarainen (2000) and Lave and Wenger (1991) seem to coincide with the goals set for the process. The goals have a rather good correspondence with the experiences of the respondents. Based on that, it can be stated that the goals were set in a way, that such group could achieve them, by learning through participation and from other people's experiences.

8 DISCUSSION

The discussion chapter is divided into three parts. Firstly, I elaborate how the Seeking Conviviality process and conducting research about it has developed my understanding of diaconia. Secondly, I give some recommendations for the future. Also, I consider what could be the implications of the process, as in the practice for diaconia but also from the point of view how the topic could be further studied. Finally, I consider the professional development achieved from the participation to the Seeking Conviviality process and from completing the research.

8.1 Development in Understanding of Diaconia

After participating to the three workshops of the Seeking Conviviality process and conducting a research about the experiences of the participants, I have gained new insights and my conception of diaconia has broadened. The concept of conviviality gives a possibility to examine diaconia from a point of view that emphasizes on the strength of diversity and community. In a time like this, which is shaped by the promotion of self-centeredness and pressure of getting along alone, the understanding of conviviality is needed.

For me, it was significant to develop the understanding about the ideas of conviviality. As a future deacon and social worker, the concept has particularly validity when there is a need to be able to get along with diverse groups. Furthermore, I have considered that conviviality is not only about getting along with the different nationalities, but also with people with same nationality but different ideologies or social classes. The art and practice of living together is needed in all everyday encounters.

The process and conducting research about it has broadened my understanding of how diverse the diaconia work is in different parts of Europe. The understanding of diaconia that I have gained also seems to resonate with the results of this research, since many of the respondents expressed the fact that they learnt something from the other contexts.

8.2 Recommendations, Implications and Ideas for Further Research

Some recommendations can be drawn from the findings of this research, which could be applied to the continuation of the Seeking Conviviality process or to the similar kind of processes. The learning from other participants' contexts and the importance of the group was emphasized in the results. That could be applied in the future of the process, or when similar kinds of process are organized, by giving enough space for sharing about different experiences. Also, as the group of the participants was diverse, it is advisable to have diverse groups in the future too, when similar kind of processes are organized. That could ensure that diverse views and understandings on different issues would be represented.

The results of this research disclose that for many of the participants the Seeking Conviviality process has been meaningful and useful, but also that the concrete outcome of the process might be hard to visualize in a large organization. Based on that notion, it could be recommended that more attention should be paid to strategies for the implementation of the outcome of the process in the future of the project. In case similar kinds of process will be organized, more attention could be paid on that matter from the beginning.

Some of the respondents indicated that participation in the project between the workshops was sometimes challenging, since in addition to their own work there were also supplementary tasks, e.g. writing the publication. It was also

mentioned, that the supplementary tasks were seen as useful. Thus, it can be recommended that the ways of combining one's own work and supplementary tasks could be more thought out in the future. Also, if similar kinds of projects are organized, the information about the supplementary tasks could be made clear at the start of the project, not only for the participants but to the churches and organizations which nominate them. That could ensure that there would be time in the participant's work plan for the tasks. In addition, in the future steps of the Seeking Conviviality process, more emphasis could be put on learning about new ways of diaconia in Lutheran churches outside Europe, as one of the respondents indicated that there was no chance to learn about this during the first part.

The possible implications from this research to the context of Finland, especially regarding to diaconia, can be discussed. In Finland, the economic resources in many fields of work are becoming less, and the church is not an exception in this matter. As the resources are getting less and more work pressure may be put on the individual worker, it might be beneficial to organize more possibilities for mutual sharing, for example among the diaconal workers in Finland. The results from this research suggest that learning among the participants has taken place especially through getting to know different contexts and hearing examples from those contexts. Similarly, if diaconia workers from parishes of diverse sizes and in different economic situations in Finland would gather together, same kind of learning from different contexts could take place.

Another implication from this research or from the Seeking Conviviality process for the context of diaconia in Finland could be the application of the ideas of conviviality. As the economic resources are getting fewer, the diaconia workers could embrace the ideas which conviviality promotes: companionship, creative relationships and recognizing interdependency. The emphasis should be put on the strength of community, instead of strength of one individual worker, which could be implemented by involving more people to diaconia and thus

recognizing that diaconia workers need laypeople and vice versa. The need for the involvement of more people in diaconia may apply in other countries too.

On the basis of the findings of this research, the topic could be further studied for example by focusing on the second phase of the Seeking Conviviality process. The experiences after the second phase could be studied or a complete evaluation of the whole process could be conducted. Moreover, the further research could go more deeply into the concrete learning from the process. An interesting research idea could also be to find out whether the experience of the process or the learning varies depending on which part of Europe the participant comes, as this was not emphasized in the present research.

8.3 Professional Development

Conducting this research has been a very challenging, but also most rewarding process. Since I have been participating personally in the Seeking Conviviality process until now, I have had the possibility to learn about community diaconia and to hear from the experience of professionals in the diaconal field. But I never imagined that conducting research about the process would be so challenging, but also interesting.

The research process started at the end of the autumn 2013, when I was in contact with the organizers of the Seeking Conviviality process, asking if it could be possible to conduct research about the experiences of the participants of the Seeking Conviviality project. As it was my first research project, I notice now that I could have done some things differently, such as considering the theories more deeply before starting to prepare questionnaire. However, this research process has taught me very much about conducting research. I have learnt the importance of doing the research in right order. I have also learnt about different

research methods, how to conduct qualitative research and how to analyze qualitative data.

This research process has given me self-determination and taught me about time management. I also noticed, that I have to believe in myself and my skills at the times when the writing the thesis felt most difficult. That also taught me to be more patient in order to have strength to overcome those moments, when it felt that the research was not progressing. I also consider that I have gained more academic skills while writing this research. Time management became more crucial, when I decided that I want to graduate on time and there is much to do regarding to the research. I think that the experience of conducting this research will benefit me in the future, especially if I will conduct other research. Furthermore, I am inspired by the good will of the people who have helped and guided me during this process.

The topic of the research has been meaningful to me, and that is why it was interesting to conduct the research. It also gave me possibility to reflect on the Seeking Conviviality process; the workshops, the issues I have learnt about there and the people I have met through it. Especially pondering over the results of the research, discovering what have the others learnt and what ideas and insights they have been able to gain for their own contexts has also taught me a great deal . All in all, the research process and participating to the Seeking Conviviality process has given me more motivation and enthusiasm towards diaconal and social work.

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APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE SEEKING CONVIVIALITY PROCESS

Dear Solidarity Group,

It has been a while since we met each other in Nuremberg for our last workshop. I introduced for you the idea of connecting my final thesis for Seeking Conviviality process. The aim of my research is to gather the experiences and outcomes from the participants' perspective in relation to their own engagement of implementing what they have learnt and experienced during the Seeking Conviviality process. I aim to produce material for Lutheran World Federation to strengthen their self-understanding of the process and produce ideas and pointers for the future if similar kinds of processes will occur. Furthermore, the research can raise awareness of diaconia in European context and show where the Lutheran World Federation's process was creative. Also, this research can help the members of Solidarity Group to reflect the process and how it has affected.

Lately I have been planning the construction of the research. I have come up with the questionnaire that will be the starting point for the "real" work. The questionnaire will be used as data for my thesis and I will analyze the answers. Some answers may be referenced in my thesis, but all the answers will remain anonymous. The data will be storaged only in my personal computer and in my use. I will storage the data until my thesis is accepted and I am graduated. After that the data will be destroyed. Your anonymity will remain and you have the right to withdraw from the research anytime if you wish so. After receiving the answers for the questionnaire, I may need to clarify some of the answers via Skype interview. In the questionnaire you can indicate if you are willing to participate to Skype interview. I wish you could answer until 15.5.2014.

I am grateful from the journey we have done together, from Järvenpää until this day. This process has grown me both professionally and personally. I cordially thank you for taking part in this research.

Sincerely yours, *Maria Kulju*

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for participants in the Seeking Conviviality-process

1. What is your name?

_____

2. Are you working mainly as a volunteer, paid worker or pastor
in the diaconal work field?

○ a) Volunteer

○ b) Paid worker

○ c) Pastor

3. Where are you mainly doing your diaconal work?

○ a) Local Parish

○ b) Diaconal Organization

○ c) Church Administration

○ d) Christian Organization

○ e) Secular Organization

   f) Somewhere else -where?

○

_____

4. What type of work are you doing in diaconia?

○ a) Grass root level work

○ b) Administrative work

○ c) Education-focused work

○ d) Development work

e) Something else -what?

○

_____

5. What kind of diaconal education do you have?

_____

_____

6. How did you get involved with the Seeking Conviviality-process?

_____

_____

_____

7. Which workshops did you take part in?

☐ a) Järvenpää, Finland 2011

☐ b) Odessa, Ukraine 2013

☐ c) Nürnberg, Germany 2014

8. What did you learn from working in the cross-national multicultural context of the Seeking Conviviality- process?

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9. What was most important for you in taking part to Seeking Conviviality-process?

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10. What was most challenging for you in taking part to Seeking Conviviality-process?

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11. How did you contribute to the Seeking Conviviality-process?

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12. How would you develop the Seeking Conviviality-process?

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13. Could you bring some ideas or insights from the Seeking Conviviality-process to your working environment and/or your local Lutheran context?

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14. Explain the main points of your personal action plan, please.

_____

_____

_____

15. Have you been able to implement your personal action plan? If so, in which ways?

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16. How are you going to implement your personal action plan in future?

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17. Did you take part in the Diakonia Day at the LWF European Church Leadership Consultation in Ostrava, Czech Republic in May 2012?

○ a) Yes

○ b) No (If you answer "no", you can continue to question 19)

18. How do you connect Diakonia Day at the LWF European Church Leadership Consultation with the Seeking Conviviality-process?

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_____

19. Could you give some suggestions for development about the Seeking Conviviality-process?

_____

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_____

20. Are you taking part in the European Diaconal Process 2014-2016?

○ a) Yes

○ b) No (If you answer "no", you can continue to question 23)

21. Which working group do you belong to?

○ a) Platform Conviviality

○ b) Towards a Convivial Economy

○ c) Convivial Theology

22. What expectations do you have for your participation
in the European Diaconal Process 2014-2016?

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_____

23. Would you like to give some other comments about Seeking Conviviality-process?

_____

_____

_____

24. In case more information is needed, are you willing to participate in Skype-
interview?

○ a) Yes

○ b) No