



---

# Hope in Action

## An Intercultural Course on Diakonia and Social Activism

September 1 – November 22, 2024 at the Diaconal College in Aarhus, Denmark

*Hope in Action* is a three-month, hands-on course on engaging in civil society on the basis of the values of “diakonia”. The course aims to empower participants to unlock their own potential as well as the potential of their churches or faith-based organisations to challenge structures harmful to people and planet and to contribute to the sustainable development of a more just world. The goal is to equip participants with **knowledge, tools, and training on how to translate the hope faith encompasses into action.**

The course is offered with support from *Center for Church-Based Development (CKU)* and *Y’s Men International, Region Denmark*, and in collaboration with a number of Danish diaconal or development organisations. The participants of *Hope in Action* are recruited among the international partners of these organisations, as it is **a way to strengthen and build the capacity of the international partnerships as well as the individual participants.**

At the same time, the course is an opportunity for **an exceptional intercultural experience** where participants from diverse countries and contexts come together in Denmark to learn not only from the Danish way of civil society organisation and participation but also from each other!

---

*This document gives an overview of the content and practicalities around the course.  
For further information or specific enquiries, please contact:*

Jeanette Nielsen  
Course Director  
hopeinaction@diakonhojskolen.dk  
+45 2750 6071

## Course Organiser and Location

Hope in Action is situated at and offered by the Diaconal College in Aarhus, Denmark, in collaboration with a number of Danish (faith-based) organisations.

The Diaconal College is located at the outskirts of Aarhus, the second largest city of Denmark, in close proximity to both forest, sea and city centre. The College is a state recognized educational institution, that dates back to 1920. It has around 350 students at its two BA programmes *Diakonia and Social Pedagogy* and *Christianity, Culture and Communication*. Around a quarter of the students live at the College's dormitory, where also participants of Hope in Action will be accommodated.

## Course Content

The course is a full-time study. The weekly schedule consists of a mix of lectures, workshops and exercises, excursions, group work and individual studies. Under the headings *knowledge*, *tools*, and *training* the course includes the following subjects/elements:

- Diakonia and Development (D&D)
- Global Citizenship Education (GCE)
- Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding (IIU)
- Leadership and Organisational Development (L&OD)
- Project Work (PW)
- Advocating and Mobilising for Change (AMC)
- Internship: A Week in a Danish Diaconal/Development Organisation
- Civil Society Study Trip to Copenhagen

See "Course Curriculum" from page 4 for details on the content of each subject/element.

## Teachers

The different subjects of the course will be taught by lecturers from the Diaconal College and VIA University College and by practitioners with years of experience from Danish and international civil society organisations.

See our website for a short bio of some of the main teachers at the course:

[www.diakonhojskolen.dk/hope-in-action/teachers](http://www.diakonhojskolen.dk/hope-in-action/teachers).

## Requirements of Participants

- Aged 22-30.
- Active involvement in a church or faith-based organisation with a connection to a Danish organisation/congregation who is willing and able to sponsor the course fee and travel expenses (or apply for funding, see next page).
- Aspirations to take a leading role in diaconal/development work upon returning home.
- At least upper intermediate level English language skills and academic abilities to complete a full-time study.
- Participation in the full course programme, including extracurricular activities, such as morning assemblies, practical chores, and social happenings.

## Course Fee

The price of the course is **45.000 DKK**. This includes:

- Accommodation in dorm rooms with one or more roommates
- Full board
- Teaching fee and materials
- Study trip to Copenhagen and minor excursions
- Pocket money of a 1000 DKK monthly.

Expenses regarding visa application, insurance, and travel to and from Denmark are not included.

## Responsibilities of Partner Organisations

- Identify and mediate contact between a potential participant and the course administration.
- Sponsor the course fee, travel, and insurance expenses, or apply for funding, if a member of CKU - Center for Kirkeligt Udviklingssamarbejde: [www.cku.dk/projektstoette/cku-puljen](http://www.cku.dk/projektstoette/cku-puljen).
- Assist the participant in making travel arrangements, including appropriate travel insurance.
- If relevant, assist the participant in applying for a visa – the course administration will supply the necessary documents.
- Plan a five-day internship for the participant in collaboration with the course administration.
- Be available to the participant during his/her stay in Denmark, maybe once in a while invite the participant home or out on a trip.
- Offer professional guidance on the participant's project ideas throughout the course, especially during the weeks scheduled for the subject Project Work.
- Participate in Farewell Party the last Wednesday evening of the course.
- Bring/guide the participant from the airport or train/bus station to and from the Diaconal College.

## Application process

- **The application deadline is May 15** or until the course is full.
- The applicant must send a completed application form together with a recommendation from a leader in his/her organisation/congregation by e-mail to his/her Danish partner organisation, who will forward the application to the course administration.
- The Danish partner organisation must appoint a contact person, who will be the link between the course administration, the Danish partner, the applicant, and his/her sending organisation.
- When the participant has been accepted, he/she will receive an acceptance letter with practical information and a confirmation form to be signed and returned.
- Participants, who need to apply for a visa, should do so at the latest by the beginning of June – the course administration will supply the required documentation.

## Course Curriculum

### Diakonia and Development (D&D)

*Learning objective:* The participant has knowledge of the history of social work within the Christian church, of diakonia as a concept, and of the values on which it is based. The participant can reflect on how diakonia can contribute to civil society. The participant is able to discuss theologically and sociologically the role of church and faith-based organisations as actors in development work.

*Topics:*

- The concept of diakonia
- The methodology and target groups of diakonia
- Diakonia in Denmark: Visits at diaconal institutions and organisations
- Religion and development – interactions and breaking points

### Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

*Learning objective:* The participant has knowledge of globalisation and its consequences at both individual and societal level. The participant can reflect on what it means to be a responsible and active global citizen. The participant is able to incorporate GCE principles and relate them to diaconal values in projects and development work.

*Topics:*

- GCE as a pedagogical approach fostering critical thinking and decision-making
- Deconstruction of stereotypes and reframing communication on social and global issues
- Democracy, as a form of government and as a mindset
- Human rights and anti-discrimination, including gender and LGBT+-issues
- Sustainable development versus economic growth, including UN's Global Goals

### Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding (IIU)

*Learning objective:* The participant has knowledge of concepts of culture and religion. The participant can reflect on opportunities and challenges in intercultural and interreligious encounters and collaborations. The participant is able to navigate and take into consideration the implications as well as the potentials of cultural and religious diversity in diaconal projects and development work.

*Topics:*

- Theories of culture and religion
- Intercultural competence and communication
- Dialogue methods, including Nonviolent Communication
- Interreligious initiatives in Denmark: Field visits

### Leadership and Organisational Development (L&OD)

*Learning objectives:* The participant has knowledge of what it takes to build and lead a strong civil society organization. The participant can reflect on and analyse challenges and opportunities of her/his own organisation or congregation and is able to facilitate organisational development and improvement in accordance with diaconal and democratic values.

*Topics:*

- The WHY of organising – the Danish perspective
- Tools and exercises for building, strengthening, and nurturing organisations
- Value-based leadership, including conflict resolution and anti-radicalisation
- Ensuring democratic participation - transparency and accountability
- Working with volunteers – recruitment & motivation



## Project Work (PW)

*Learning objectives:* The participant has knowledge of all aspects of a typical project cycle, including fundraising. The participant can reflect on and choose the most suitable among different project planning tools. The participant is able to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate project activities.

### *Topics:*

- Strategies and priorities of Danida (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs development cooperation)
- Fundraising, including a visit to CISU (distributor of Danida funds) to get a donor's perspective
- Project design tools, including Logical Framework Approach, Theory of Change and others
- Financial management of donor funded development project
- Working in an international partnership
- Project sustainability
- Best practice cases

## Advocating and Mobilising for Change (AMC)

*Learning objectives:* The participant has knowledge of ways to go about advocacy and campaigning. The participant can reflect on how to adapt communication to the intended audience and also take into consideration the power relations in the lines of communication. The participant is able to plan and execute awareness raising activities mobilising support for social issues.

### *Topics:*

- The WHY of activism – what motivates you?
- Social movements – how to mobilise and build commitment
- Aesthetic approaches to awareness raising: Documentary film, forum theatre, poetry slam, street art etc.
- Social Media - opportunities and challenges
- Lobby and dialogue with authorities
- Best practice cases

## Internship in a Danish Organisation

The participant will experience a Danish diaconal or development organisation from within through a five-day internship organised in collaboration with the participant's Danish partner organisation. It will be an opportunity to observe the knowledge (to be) acquired unfold in practice. The aim of the internship is to strengthen the partnership between the participant and the Danish organisation, to deepen the participant's knowledge of the Danish context, and to inspire the participant with ideas for activities or projects to carry out in his or her own organisation/congregation.

## Civil Society Study Trip to Copenhagen

During a five-day study trip to the capital of Denmark, the participants will experience Danish democracy and civil society at different levels and from different angles. We will visit the Danish parliament, Christiansborg, and various civil society initiatives and organisations to get an idea of how a democratic (civil) society like the Danish works. There will also be some time for sightseeing.

### ***Extracurricular activities:***

- **Monday Tunes (Mandagsklang)**  
Every Monday all students gather a quarter before the morning break and sing a selection of songs from the Danish Folk High School Songbook – the participants will join and get an opportunity to listen to and with time learn some of the classic Danish songs – and maybe share some songs from their own culture.

- Brain Break (Tankepause)**  
 Every Tuesday and Thursday there is a short morning assembly for all students and staff at the Diaconal College. Staff take turns to share a short reflection and we sing a couple of songs. Tuesdays it will take place in English or translated, and participants of Hope in Action are welcome to opt in on sharing a reflection.
- Friday Reflection**  
 On Friday morning, we have our own morning assembly, where we wrap up the week and look into the next. Participants can share brief reflections on whatever they have in mind - be it of a professional, personal, or spiritual nature.
- Café afternoons and parties**  
 Some afternoons there will be a social event for all students at the Diaconal College, including Hope in Action participants, who will also be responsible for one of the cafés. There will also be a couple of evening parties for the entire college during the three months.
- Culture Club**  
 Culture Club, approximately every second week, is an informal, social space for participants to share aspects of their culture with fellow participants – be it in form of food, music, dance, stories etc.
- Cleaning duties**  
 The participants will be enrolled in the dormitory’s cleaning rotation and is furthermore responsible for keeping their own space tidy.
- Farewell Party**  
 We invite contact persons from the Danish partner organisations, course and college staff and friends among the Danish students for a farewell party, where the participants will receive their diploma.

## Weekly Schedule

Except when in internship, on study trip or field visits etc., the weekly schedule will look approximately as below. Before each new week the participants will receive an updated and more detailed timetable, where also eventual social activities in the afternoon/evening will appear.

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.50-08.10	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
08.10-08.25		BRAIN BREAK		BRAIN BREAK	
08.30-10.00	LESSONS 09.45 MONDAY TUNES	LESSONS	LESSONS	LESSONS	08.30-9.00 FRIDAY REFLECTION LESSONS
10.00-10.20	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee
10.20-12.30	LESSONS	LESSONS	LESSONS	LESSONS	LESSONS
12.30-13.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13.00-15.00	SUPERVISED GROUP WORK	SUPERVISED GROUP WORK	SUPERVISED GROUP WORK	SUPERVISED GROUP WORK	SUPERVISED GROUP WORK
15.00-18.00	INDIVIDUAL STUDY /Free time	INDIVIDUAL STUDY /Free time	INDIVIDUAL STUDY /Free time	INDIVIDUAL STUDY /Free time	INDIVIDUAL STUDY /Free time
18.00-18.30	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper
Evening	Free time/ INDIVIDUAL STUDY	Free time/ INDIVIDUAL STUDY	Free time/ INDIVIDUAL STUDY	Free time/ INDIVIDUAL STUDY	Free time/ INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Most weekends are at free disposal for:

- Preparation for or catching up on studies
- Visiting contacts from partner organisation
- Hanging out with the other participants or the Danish students at the dormitory
- Trips downtown Aarhus or around the area
- Cultural experiences or religious services
- Etc.