

CODE Forum 2026

Introduction to the main Speaker

Line Merethe Skum

Justice and Land Issues: A Case Study of the Agreement Process Between Senja Municipality and Mineral Commodities Ltd

The presentation is based on a case study, and it examines how Indigenous rights may be marginalized in the pursuit of accelerated industrial development framed within the discourse of the green transition at the local level. Drawing on a case study from Northern Norway, it analyzes the agreement process between Senja municipality and the mining company Mineral Commodities Ltd concerning a graphite exploration project in a central Sámi reindeer herding area. Despite Norway's formal commitments to Indigenous rights, including the ILO Convention No. 169 and the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), the case reveals a marked gap between legal obligations and their implementation in practice.

The analysis engages the Church of Norway's diaconal concept of "struggle for justice," alongside Nancy Fraser's framework of redistribution and recognition and the concept of strategic ignorance. These perspectives illuminate how procedural shortcomings, power asymmetries, and lack of meaningful consultation contribute to socioeconomic and cultural injustice.

By unpacking these dynamics, the presentation highlights broader implications for justice, democratic governance, and Indigenous self-determination in resource governance, while also questioning what it means to pursue justice in diaconal practice when land rights issues remain insufficiently addressed both in Norway and worldwide.

Biographies and Background of the Speaker:

Line Merethe Skum

Line Merethe Skum is Assistant Professor in Diaconia at the Faculty of Theology and Society at VID Specialized University, Campus Tromsø, Norway. She holds a Master of Health Sciences, Specialization in Diaconal Studies. Her research interest has focused on Sámi youth work, Indigenous Peoples and land rights issues and truth and reconciliation topics concerning the Sámi people.

Besides lecturing, publishing and supervising master students, Line offers to share diaconia related issues with deacons and other church workers in the northern region of Norway.

Line served in international ecumenical work through the Indigenous Peoples Programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for several years. Her interest for Indigenous Peoples and land rights started there, although her background as a reindeer herder also has influenced a lot her field of interest. She has been a part of the research group CODE since 2019.