

# **CODE Forum 2026**

## Introduction to the Papers and Workshops

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### **Towards Transformative Diakonia: Social Inequality and Urban Diaconal Practice between Solidarity and Division**

Picture an adult entering a diaconal advice centre after months of insecure housing, unanswered letters, and repeated explanations of the same painful story. The question at that moment is not only whether a service can provide food, counselling, or referral. The deeper question is whether the encounter will restore or further diminish a sense of being human. This presentation develops an analytical framework for examining exactly that question. Rather than presenting completed fieldwork, it lays out a research design for a future qualitative study in diaconal settings in Frankfurt am Main. In this city, economic prosperity sits alongside housing precarity, migration-related vulnerability, and institutional mistrust.

The framework centres on four dimensions: dignity, belonging, trust, and agency. These are understood not as abstract ideals, but as diagnostic markers for reading everyday service encounters. Where do waiting rooms, forms of address, confidentiality practices, and referral procedures actually land on these dimensions? Where do they protect human worth, and where do they quietly reproduce the exclusion people bring through the door? In a time of polarisation and declining trust, this presentation invites us to examine whether diaconal care merely manages need or makes human worth visible.