



Anna Lindh -säätiön Suomen verkosto

Coordination of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) Finland's National Network 2019–2020

Semi-annual report

Reporting period: 1.1.–30.6.2019

Reporting date: 30.9.2019

Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East (FIME)

Inka Nokso-Koivisto, 040 7320 776, inka.nokso-koivisto@fime.fi

Summary

The main purpose of the coordinator of the national Network is to represent the ALF in Finland and to share information of its activities in Finland, to coordinate the activities of the Finnish Network, and to participate to the planning and implementation of the overall ALF plan of action and various programs.

Aims of the project and actions taken during the reporting period

Aim 1: FIME works as ALF's official representative in Finland. It provides information on the ALF upon request as well as actively promotes the visibility of ALF in Finland by informing, reporting and advertising its activities in social, cultural and human affairs.

Actions:

Newsletters for members and others interested in following the news of ALF programs and activities, as well as other information concerning intercultural dialogue. Information on funding opportunities, international meetings, local events, introductions of members and their advertisements. Five newsletters were sent during the reporting period.

Other email to all members i.e. forwarded announcements from the ALF, enquiries for project partners, job opportunities, funding opportunities etc. Three e-mails were sent during the reporting period.

www-pages updated regularly to inform of ALF activities and other intercultural activities. 32 updates and 800 page viewers.



Social media updates in Facebook and Twitter. 66 updates.

During the reporting period there was no international calls or events that could have been spread in the Finnish network.

Aim 2: FIME participates to the international ALF

Work. The coordinators communicate with the ALF secretariat on a regular basis and welcome any international ALF events to take place in Finland. FIME also prioritizes sending members of the Finnish Network to participate to international ALF activities. The coordinators actively participate to the development of governance, activities and communication of the Foundation with emphasis on the need to address issues crucial to the region, transparent governance, well-defined work schedules and open and youthful methods of communication. The coordinators also are in regular online communication with ALF network coordinators in other countries and work in collaboration with the ALF Board of Governors.

Actions:

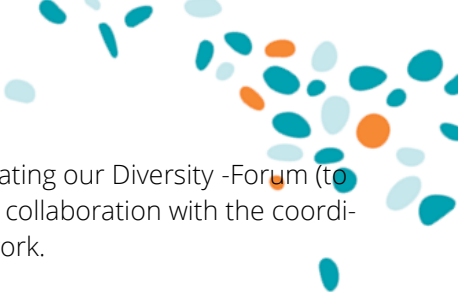
FIME applied with success the Network Coordination Support from the ALF. The application process was demanding and required deep knowledge on EU-project funding application process. The coordination agreement started on the 21st of May 2019 and will end on the 31st of December 2020. The amount of financial support received from ALF will be altogether 45 089 euro.

FIME participated in regular webinars organized by the ALF Secretariat on Med Forum 2020 and on the ways to improve the communication and cooperation between the secretariat and the national networks. Seven webinars were held during the reporting period.

E-mail communications with the ALF Secretariat and other network coordinators. FIME stayed in active contact with the Secretariat to encourage them to implement the management support funding on schedule.

Representative of FIME participated in the second Pre-event Meeting of the MED FORUM 2020 organised in Zadar, Croatia from 11 to 13 June 2019. The theme of this three-day meeting was Sustainable development of local communities in the Euro-Mediterranean, and it brought together representatives of ALF networks from most of the member countries. In addition to program related to the theme, the coordinators of national networks had sessions in which the views collected from the members of the national networks on aims and topics of the MED FORUM 2020 were shared and elaborated.

FIME provided and spread information of the results of Intercultural Trends Report 2018 through a social media campaign during May and June 2019.



Preparations for the international Celebrating our Diversity -Forum (to be held in October 2019) were started in collaboration with the coordinators of the Swedish National ALF-Network.

Preliminary discussions on organizing Young Mediterranean Voices -activities in Finland in Autumn 2019 were initiated. The Finnish national network does not have many youth organizations as members yet, and FIME started preparatory research in order to find Finnish potential partners in implementing these activities in Finland.

The reorganization of the international ALF network took the whole reporting period. The Finnish national network was among the first ones signing the contact with ALF Secretariat, and only some of the national networks worked under the official coordination contract during the reporting period. For that, the possibilities to take part to international activities organized by other national networks were limited.

Aim 3: FIME strengthens the Finnish network. The coordinators actively promote the network's membership and inform potential new members about activities and possibilities of support and assistance the ALF can offer. FIME facilitates the improvement of the project management, financial and organizational capacity of network members. FIME organizes and coordinates national and international seminars and training related to ALF activities and ensures that the ALF Finnish network is transparent and democratic one.

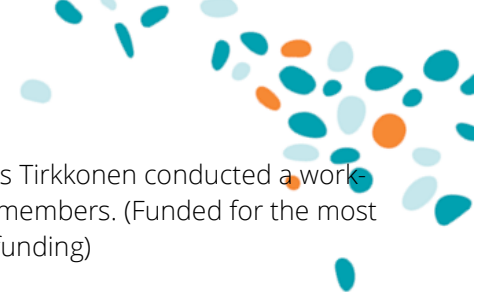
Actions:

Meeting of the steering committee was organized on the 14th of February. In that meeting, the steering committee planned for the future activities, looked for the ways to reactivate the network and discussed the ways the Finnish network should contribute to the MED FORUM 2020. It was agreed that the term of office of the steering committee in its current composition shall be continued until the autumn meeting of the network.

FIME participated the Finnish Social Forum on the 4–5 May 2019 with two panel discussions related to gender issues: the first one on patriarchal interpretations of religion and traditions, and the second one on the Migrant Women in Europe and North Africa. The panel discussions were organized in cooperation with an ALF member MONIKA - Multicultural Women's Association.

FIME organized a public discussion in the World Village Festival on the 25–26 May with the title: "From barricades to hashtags – Social media in the Middle East", in which the director of a Lebanese ALF member, NGO Social Media Exchange (SMEX) Mohamad Najem was interviewed by journalist Sanna Raita-Aho. The event was organized in cooperation with an ALF member Association of Finnish Foreign Affairs Journalists.

As for the capacity building activities for the network members, a **Facilitation Training** was arranged on the 28th of May. In the half-day training,



a professional facilitation expert Tuomas Tirkkonen conducted a workshop in which participated for network members. (Funded for the most part from the ALF Secretariat Program funding)

Re-launch of the Finnish Network was held at the beginning of the contract period with the ALF Secretariat on the 3rd of June. One of the composers of the ALF Intercultural Trends -report, Professor Konrad Pedziwiatr from the Cracow University of Economics gave a short lecture on the outcomes of the report. The program of the meeting also consisted workshops on the following themes: 1) Preventing youth radicalization, 2) What kind of values do we want our children to learn? and 3) F2F meetings and media literacy skills against stereotypes. The workshops were facilitated by the participants of the Facilitation Training (see above item d). The biannual general assembly of the Finnish national network was held at the end of the meeting and proposals of the network members for the program of the MED FORUM 2020 were collected in groups discussions. The event was organized in cooperation with an ALF member Hanasaari Culture Center. (Funded for the most part from the ALF Secretariat Program funding)

FIME organized in cooperation with an ALF member University of Tampere an **Open Seminar on Youth Transition in the Middle East and North Africa** on the 17th of June. Keynote speeches were given by Senior Research Fellow Elena Sánchez-Montijano from the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs and Assistant Professor Fadma Ait Mous from the University of Hassan II Casablanca.

In order to broaden and activate the network, FIME actively **contacted** current and potential member organizations. During the reporting period, there were person-to-person meetings with eight organizations and, in addition to that, dozens of email and phone contacts.


No new member applications could be received during the reporting period, because the application process was closed by the ALF secretariat. FIME actively requested the secretariat to reopen the application system.

Challenges and Achievements

Challenges:

The Finnish network had been inactive for eight months before the beginning of the reporting period. Hence, the main goal of the first half of the year 2019 was to reactivate the Finnish network.

On the international level, there were no official national network coordinators in majority of the other ALF member countries for most of the reporting period. For that, few international events or events organised in collaboration of various national networks were organised. That naturally influenced in Finnish members as well, because one of the main reasons to be part of the ALF network is the possibility to take part to the international activities.



The membership application system was not active during the reporting period, which also posed certain challenges to the activating process of the network and official recruitment of new members was not possible.

The process of applying the Network Coordination funding was extremely time-consuming and requirements were changed by the Secretariat in the middle of the process, which costed extra efforts from the applicants. Majority of the working hours during the first months of the reporting period were used for this application process.

Achievements:

Taking into account these circumstances, the activating process of the network was successful. There were several events organised mainly in Helsinki area but also in Tampere. The content and themes of the events were diverse, and members were active in planning and organizing events in cooperation with FIME. Also, the participation of the network members to events was rather active, although that required more personal contacting and advertising work than at some more active phases of the network.

Finland was among the first ones to make the coordination contract with the ALF Secretariat despite complicated application process.

Presence of the network in social media and visibility through newsletters was vibrant, and the goals were achieved well in that area.