



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.–30.6.2020

Reporting date: 10.8.2020

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

Inka Nokso-Koivisto, 040 7320 776, [inka.nokso-koivisto\[at\]fime.fi](mailto: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 co-ordinate 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. Six newsletters were sent during the reporting period.

An international call for 1+1 Anna Lindh Foundation project funding was passed to the Finnish network. 3 network members participated our info webinar (18.3.2020) and one applied for funding.



Steering committee member Tuula Jääskeläinen briefed our members on **Anna Lindh Foundation's resources** for intercultural citizenship education (14.2.2020). Information on ALF resources was collected on network's webpage.

www-pages updated regularly to inform of ALF activities and other intercultural activities. 37 updates and 2383 page viewers.

Social media updates in Facebook and Twitter. 77 updates.

Exchange with Moniheli: As Moniheli visited Celebrating our Diversity Forum in 2019, the co-ordinators of the network gave a presentation on the ALF in Associations' Club: Develop your association with cooperation across borders -event organised by Moniheli (2.6.2020). The member base of Moniheli and Anna Lindh net-work overlaps, which gives possibilities for co-operation.

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 participated in **regular webinars** organized by the ALF Secretariat and staying in close **e-mail communications** with the ALF Secretariat and other network coordinators.

FIME is a partner in **1+1 funding application** by the Swedish Network for "Celebrating our Diversity 2". Other partners are the German and Lebanese network. FIME is also a partner in an application by the Slovenian network for an event, "Intercultural cities 2". As of 10.8., ALF has not yet informed of the results of the application process. FIME received partner proposals also from Luxemburg and Tunisia.

No Heads' of Networks Meeting was held in 1-6/2020, because of the Covid-19 crisis. All activities planned to take place in Croatia were postponed.

The proposal of **the MED FORUM 2020 task force** for a workshop on "Transformative Education" was accepted to the program of the Med Forum. A member of the task force, Heidi Saarinen, was also invited to



present in a plenary. Five ALF-funded participants from Finland were accepted, in addition to six sent by us. Preparatory Med Forum meeting scheduled for 11.3.2020 was cancelled as the forum was postponed.

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:

Together with the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) a **networking event for the education professionals** was organized 14.2.2020. 12 participants.

No general assembly was organized due to corona.

Meeting of the Steering Committee was organized on 4.3.2020.

A seven-part webinar series 8.4.–27.5.2020 on ALF themes. The themes varied from media portrayals of immigrants to interfaith dialogue and climate change. 293 individuals participated one or more of the webinars. Feedback on the series was highly positive. The series also had great outreach potential because majority of the participants were not yet network members.

A call for proposals for **joint events with network members** was launched in January. Three proposals were accepted, out of which two were cancelled because of the corona outbreak. One of the events with Department of Orthodox Theology in University of Eastern Finland may still take place in the fall 2020.

Three other events were postponed or cancelled: 26.4. panel on indigenous peoples with Afous Afous in Finnish Social Forum, cancelled; 7.5. Iftar dinner with Nice Hearts, Monaliiku, Amal and Peace union, cancelled; 19.5. Polarization and Radicalization "ALF talk" with FOKUS and University of Helsinki, postponed to 2021.

Staff mission to Turku (aimed to be 15.5.) was cancelled due to corona.

Online **Podcast-training** for network members and organizations planning for membership was organized 11.6. The training was organized in collaboration with Jaksomedia podcast company. 26 participated in the training.

During the reporting period, network was broadened with four new members. Another application is still in process.

Challenges and Achievements

Report on structure and governance of the network was finished, as well as the Communications and outreach strategy.

International level

The monthly webinars by the ALF were resumed. Email communications with the secretariat is now slightly easier, when the HoNs have a contact person in the outreach team (networks team) and hopefully this will not change due to the resignation of the current Outreach Manager. The secretariat's communications on Young Mediterranean Voices and Intercultural Trends report is frequent, but other activities of the secretariat are seldom communicated. Administrative requests from the secretariat seem to lack coordination, and for instance, revisions to the national networks' action plans due to corona crisis were requested from HoNs several times.

The Finnish network

The Finnish network was functioning well and attracting new members, in the pre-corona situation. We received five application for membership. This tells that activities during 2019 have brought visibility for the network.

The networking event in the National Agency for Education was successful in bringing together specialists of a certain field. This is a possible format for future events. The audience was small but dedicated, thus the discussion was focused and potential for future cooperation was greater than in bigger events.

The Finnish network managed to react quick and efficiently to the situation changed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the coordinators did not have earlier experience on organizing such online events, it only took couple of weeks before we had a weekly webinar series going on and, possibly partly because there were not yet huge amount of online activities available, we managed to gain much bigger audience and visibility through the webinars than we usually do in our physical events. We also reached a wide audience of civil society actors in Finland that were not previously familiar with the ALF. We also managed to open discussions on some ALF-related themes, that have not received much attention in the Finnish network before. Online event also offered audience all around Finland the possibility to participate in network activities.

FIME as the HoN was invited to participate in four joint applications for the Foundation's 1+1 funding. This is a sign that the Finnish network and FIME are appreciated as trusted partners.

Risks and possibilities in corona

In 2019 our newsletter was opened by 40–50 percent of the recipients. The percentage dropped at the beginning of the corona outbreak to 30–40 percent. This is a threat for our communications: the most important messages are communicated in the newsletter. Corona might



have affected organizations' abilities to use their human resources for network activity.

Despite the visibility the webinar series achieved among new audiences, the webinars organised during the Covid-19 restrictions did not attract huge number of current network members. Thus, our online activities did not manage to bring the network together not to mention strengthening it during the corona crisis. Only 21 of our 109 member organizations participated in at least one webinar.

Organizing events online has been faster and more cost-efficient. The platform that was chosen, Zoom, has problems in security. Another risk is that the lack of social element in online events reduces possibilities for new partnerships and collaborations.

Planning the future activities is challenging in uncertain times. Inviting people from abroad is not feasible in the fall 2020. Having small events may be possible. Most of the meetings and events will be online, of course. The venue and catering expenses can be cut, but online events still need considerable human resources. Cancellation of events may lead to loss of already spent human resources.

As of June 2020, the pandemic has not caused serious disruptions to general support towards members. Social media communications, webpage updates and newsletters are still published as they were before. We decided not to organize general assembly in spring 2020. If the restrictions continue next fall, we will organize an online general assembly instead of a physical one.