



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2014

Abilis Foundation, established in 1998, aims at promoting in different ways the activities, human rights, equal opportunities and independent living of persons with disabilities in developing countries. The Foundation funds small trustworthy, high-quality projects planned and implemented by the disabled persons themselves. Thus, the Foundation's method of funding projects promotes the empowerment and social integration of persons with disabilities. Funding is granted to grass roots organizations for projects whose funding requirement ranges from 500 to 20 000 €. The Foundation receives the bulk of its financing from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs Development Cooperation Fund. The Ministry funding for the year 2014 totalled 2 800 000 €.

In 2014, the second year of the current financial period (2013–2015), both the plan of action and the budget were carried out successfully. All the Foundation's activities, funding included, continued to expand. Also human resources were increased to match the growing need. The single most significant change while also the most laborious endeavour was the replacement of the Foundation's project management software (Prospekti). The process consisted of searching for new software through competitive tendering (spring-summer 2014) and of building it up in the course of autumn 2014. The new program, will be fine-tuned for the Foundation and taken into use in early 2015.

Expansion was clearly visible in the Foundation's funding activities and Project Management. Altogether 266 new applications were approved for funding, considerably more than previously (179 in 2013). While the great number of applications received and the increase in state grant contributed to the growth of activities, there were other factors as well such as the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In the autumn 2014, the Foundation funded 24 projects for diffusion of Ebola related information among persons with disabilities, thus confirming its flexibility as a funding mechanism capable of canalizing funds where they are most needed.

Of all the funds granted in the course of the year, 106 were small grants (budget below 2 500 €, 2 349 € in average), a considerably larger number than previously (38 in 2013). Their use has increased in the past few years (40 % of the projects, 14 % of the total funded) and kept doing so according to plan. In 2014, the Foundation approved 139 final reported and 113 midterm reports, while 194 new applications were rejected. In 2014, the office staff processed over 500 new applications (400 in 2013) and oversaw 508 projects (398 in 2013). The average grant for a new project was 6 671 €.

The majority, 55 %, of the granted funds went to African countries, 146 new projects funded, totalling 963 347 €. In Africa, it was Ethiopia, Somaliland, Tanzania and Uganda, who received most of the funds (11-16 new projects per country) as well as Sierra Leone. The part of Asian countries had slightly increased at 41 % (110 new projects funded, 682 899 €). Most new projects were started in Nepal (19), in Tadzhikistan (19) and in Kyrgyzstan (16).

Half of Abilis-funded projects aimed at poverty reduction of persons with disabilities. This was realized mainly through vocational training preparing persons with disabilities for micro-entrepreneurship and improving their chances of employment on the labour market. The Foundation also supported the empowerment, participation and education of persons with disabilities as well as the capacity building of DPOs (25 %). About 13 % of the projects were solely aimed at the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities while a few of them focused essentially on promoting knowledge on health and hygiene (6%,

Ebola, HIV/AIDS), on guidance in the use of social and health services, as well as on distribution of assistive devices and accessibility.

In 2014, the Foundation had to terminate 16 projects. For two of these, the funding was cancelled, while two were implemented with less funds than the amount granted. One project was terminated on demand of the DPO. The rest of the terminations were due to deficient capacity of the implementing organization or to inadequate reporting. No reimbursement demands were made in any of these cases since the project activities had been implemented for the most part and because the Foundation had been sufficiently informed on the use of the funds. There was no indication of misuse of funds.

The Partnership Programme is an important part of Abilis Foundation's Project Management, especially in as much as background-checks and follow-up (Risk Management) are concerned. In 2014 there were in total 12 Partner Countries (Africa: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia; Asia: Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Tadjikistan). The most recent partnership was launched in Mozambique in the beginning of June 2014. Moreover, in Bangladesh and Nepal, local Disabled People's Organizations were being supported thanks to special arrangements

Disability Diplomacy on Human Rights (DD) work was conducted actively under Kalle Könkkölä's leadership. The DD initiative brought together representatives from Finland and abroad to discuss mainly the inclusion of disability in all Development Cooperation work as well as all humanitarian interventions. In cooperation with the Foreign Ministry and the U.S Embassy, the Foundation organized first, in the beginning of the year, a special event, "Disability Inclusive Development", and in August 2014, a "Disability Awareness Week". Negotiatory and cooperative travels were made to Peru, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia and the U.S. The group of disability experts assembled five times in the course of the year, also, an introductory course in humanitarian aid was organized for them in cooperation with Finn Church Aid.

The preparatory work accomplished in previous years in order to boost the activities in the Mekong region was continued vigorously through the Continent Office in Bangkok, Thailand. The Abilis Vietnam Country Office opened its doors in Hanoi in the beginning of the year, followed by the Myanmar one in Yangon on July 1st, 2014. So far, they have focused on information and networking, an increase in funding activities can be expected first starting from 2015.

As a part of its quality assurance, Abilis Foundation pursued the programme of evaluation and development by means of which, a systematic mechanism for measuring the results and impact of projects as well as their sustainability will be created. The indicators thus produced were applied to small scale projects. The Foundation is also carrying out an study regarding partnership work, the results of which will be available first in 2015.

The Board assembled six times in the course of the year. In addition to funding decisions, it prepared and confirmed the Foundation's new strategy until 2021. The number of permanent staff members employed by Abilis Foundation in 2014 was 11. In the spring, two new part-time project assistants were engaged and a third one joined the team in August 2014.

The Foundation's finances were looked after in a steadfast manner while observing appropriate thriftiness and investing the funds in accordance with the by-laws. The total actual costs of the Foundation were 2 986 331 €. The Foundation's balance sheet showed a surplus of 13 801 €. In 2014, the total amount granted by the Foundation to DPOs in developing countries was 1 928 328 €. The costs of the information project were 59 070 €, those of Project Management 666 755 € (out of which, 111 855 € for the Mekong region)

and administrative costs totalled 231 904 €. The remaining 118 393 € of the state grant will be carried over to the next fiscal year.

The auditors were Raimo Hakola (CA) and Kristian Seemer (CA). Anssi Pietiläinen (CA) and Kari Mikkola (CA) acted as deputy auditors. Administer Ltd. was in charge of book-keeping, while eFina financial management software was used in financial administration and the tool for project administration was Prospekti.

Abilis Foundation will continue its funding activities in 2015 as diligently as ever. The state grant for 2015 amounts to 2 900 000 €. A new grant application (2016-2018) will be submitted to the Foreign Ministry in the spring 2015.