

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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 2013 totalled 2 700 000 €.

The year 2012 was a busy year for the Foundation's funding activities, marking the beginning of the new three-year financial period (2013-2015). The increase in state funding made it possible to launch new operations and to boost the funding activity. 2013, 15th anniversary of the Foundation's activities, was also a festive year. In celebration of this, the Foundation published the book "Pienellä tuella suuria asioita" relating in images and words the important work accomplished by it and the crucial impact of the support received by persons with disabilities in developing countries. The funding may seem insignificant in Western eyes but to a person living in the Global South it may be invaluable – a door opening to a new, socially active life.

Disability Diplomacy on Human Rights (DD) as well as the area-specific activities in the Mekong region were launched by the Foundation. The former is an initiative to be carried out under Kalle Könkkölä's leadership and through which Abilis Foundation puts its expertise on disability at the disposal of Finland's official Development Cooperation activities, such as bilateral projects, the planning and execution of country specific programs and in the assessment of the impact thereof, in addition to any other assignments given by the Foreign Ministry. The year was a succession of numerous meetings in Finland and abroad, DD related and other negotiatory travels, and the tutoring of disability experts for their future tasks, all of which got the initiative well under way. The 100 000 € funding received for the purpose was put to good use.

The preparatory work accomplished in previous years in order to boost the activities in the Mekong region resulted in recruiting a Regional Coordinator. She started her work on April 1st, 2013, the same day Abilis Foundation's Continent Office opened its doors in Bangkok. The groundwork for the first Country Office took off with a bang in Vietnam with the recruiting of a Country Coordinator at the end of 2013. Also, contacts with Myanmar improved and plans to launch activities there in the early 2014 started to take shape.

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 created were pretested in five different countries and in 33 projects. Through further development work, the indicators were perfected to a point where they can be applied to small scale projects in early 2014.

Expansion was also visible in the Foundation's funding activities and Project Management. 179 new applications were approved for funding, while 187 were rejected and 151 final reports were received. Altogether 398 projects were processed by the office staff. The average grant amounted to 7 557 €. There were 38 small, fast-track grants (2 500 € or less) decided by the Executive Director. Large special grants (exceeding 10 000 €) on the other hand, were 15 in total.

The majority, 56 %, of the granted funds went to African countries, 101 projects funded, totalling 760 371 €, showing an increase compared to last year. In Africa, it was Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somaliland, Tanzania and Uganda, who received most of the funds (11-16 new projects per country). The part of Asian countries had slightly diminished at 39 % (69 new projects funded). Most new projects were started in Nepal (15), in Kyrgyzstan (13), Tadjikistan (12) and Cambodia (10). Of all Abilis funded projects, 70 % took place in partner countries, which is in accordance with the Foundation's strategy and supports the Risk Management.

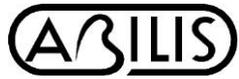
Half of Abilis-funded projects aimed at poverty reduction of persons with disabilities. This was realized mainly through vocational training preparing persons with disabilities for micro-entrepreneurship and improving their chances of employment on the labour market. The Foundation also supported the empowerment, participation and education of persons with disabilities as well as the capacity building of DPOs (24 %). About 15 % 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, on guidance in the use of social and health services, as well as on distribution of assistive devices and accessibility.

In 2013, the Foundation had to terminate nine projects. For one of these, the funding was cancelled, another one was implemented with less funds than the amount granted. Seven terminations were carried out on projects whose activities had ceased. In six cases, to complete the project was beyond the capacity of the implementing organization, too weak to be helped by counselling or guidance. Only one project was terminated when all attempts to contact the implementing organization failed. 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 are concerned. In 2013 there were in total 12 Partner Countries (Africa: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia; Asia: Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Tadjikistan). Moreover, in Bangladesh local Disabled People's Organizations were being supported thanks to special arrangements. The most recent partnership was launched in Zambia in the beginning of September 2013, whereas the one in Kazakhstan ended at the end of June. The partnership in Mozambique was concluded at the end of the year and the Foundation started a new capacity evaluation in order to find a new partner organization.

The Board assembled six times in the course of the year. In addition to funding decisions, it confirmed, among other things, the Foundation's updated Risk Management system and appointed a new Board for the next two-year period (2014-2015). The number of permanent staff members employed by Abilis Foundation in 2013 was 11. Abilis' new part-time Communications Secretary started her work and a temporary research assistant was contracted.

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 2 409 616 €. The Foundation's balance sheet showed a surplus of 12 622 €. In 2013, the total amount granted by the Foundation to DPOs in developing countries was 1 563 284 €. The costs of the information project were 52 918 €, those of Project Management 474 718 € and administrative costs totalled 206 156 €. The remaining 303 060 € of the state grant will be carried over to the next fiscal year.



The auditors for the Foundation 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 2013 as diligently as ever. The state grant for 2014 amounts to 2 800 000 €.