

*The Journey of the Anna
Lindh Foundation in
Albania 2008-2022*

Research Report



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Forewords

Remzi Lani, Executive Director of the Albanian Media Institute

Albanian Media Institute was appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Head of the Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation in Albanian in early 2020. We accepted this role knowing much about the values and the purpose upon which the ALF was initially established, and little about our network and responsibilities as network coordinators. During these two years, our efforts were focused on reviving the Albanian network, which for several years has been silent.

The revival of the network was a long, difficult process as the trust of members in the National Network had vanished taking into account the long period of inactivity. After that process, we are encouraged to see that new members are joining and the network is growing steadily, while the current members try to follow up and comply with their responsibilities as members.

Yet, one of the things we struggled with was the lack of information and data regarding our own network. As a research based institution we rely much on evidences, and this research was crucial to have for two reasons. First, it would help us to understand our network better, and secondly it will be serve as a basic document for coming years to refer to.

The findings of the research are encouraging and confirm the interest of the Albanian Network members in being active contributors for the promotion of the intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Med region. In the same time, they emphasize the potential of the Foundation, that remains to be explored by Albanian network.

Esmeralda Kashari, Project Expert

I've said this earlier, and want to stress it again that the Anna Lindh Foundation has been like a school for me as I've gained lots of knowledge when it comes to the latest socio-cultural trends in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This has come due to my direct entanglement in the ALF's initiatives, but also by going through the interesting and useful researches and reports issued especially on ICD and ICE.

As one of the experts engaged in this research, I'm glad to have had this chance to directly get in touch with the members, to listen to their feedback, needs, opinions and suggestions. It is to be appreciated that although they haven't been much involved or granted any project under the ALF Programs they still continue to believe in the potential of the Foundation and the values that it promotes.

For this reason, I reckon that the Foundation should be supported more at governmental level by each of the member states so that more organizations could benefit in terms of boosting their working capacities in the areas that the ALF promotes, and not only!

I'm so grateful to the Albanian Media Institute for engaging me in this research which undoubtedly awakened the highest interest in me as I am always passionate to work and give my contribution in the Albanian context.

Executive Summary

The national Network of Anna Lindh Foundation in Albania was established in 2008, approximately 14 years ago with the purpose of contributing to the promotion of **Intercultural Dialogue in the Euro-Med region**. Albania shares a Mediterranean identity and values, which include promotion of peace, tolerance and dialogue between cultures.

Even though the Network in Albania was established more than a decade ago, **there are no data available or a solid document that describes and explains the journey of the Anna Lindh Foundation Network in Albania**. In order to fill that void, it was conducted this research attempting to map the journey of the ALF Network in Albania from 2008 – 2022.

This research was done during February – March 2022, and the report is based on data gathered via **30 questionnaires and 12 in-depth interviews**, including with Mr. Besnik Mustafaj former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the first HoN; Ms. Admira Jorgji, Director of Europe, at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs; and members of Albanian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Three are the main pillars that this research explores: **1) the impact that the membership on the Network has had on the members, and overall for the promotion of the intercultural dialogue in Albania; 2) ALF support in strengthening member’s capacities mostly on ICD; 3) the role of the Foundation in strengthening and widening of the cooperation in Euro-Med level.**

Some of the main findings of this research highlight that **the ALF presence in Albania has had an impact in the promotion of the ICD**. More specifically, 20% of the members involved in the survey have stated that the ALF Network has influenced a lot, whilst 53.3% believe that it has influenced somehow.

When it comes to supporting members to strengthen capacities more should be done in this regard, as currently there is a lack of presence of initiatives, projects and programs. **Around 60% of the organizations who participated hasn’t received support in initiatives concerning ICD.**

More initiatives that foster and encourage partnership at Euro-Med level should be fostered and encouraged. The members feel they didn’t have the chance to get to know other members of the 41 networks. **The Foundation and HoNs should be more cautious and organize more activities that enable the organizations to get to know each-other and establish partnerships**, especially with the Southern partners of the Mediterranean.

The research **highlights** that members still believe in the importance of strengthening the Network in Albania, as it generates **new opportunities**, enhances **cooperation** and **promotes dialogue** across the Mediterranean. As a member state, through Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, **Albania, could speed up this process by acting in compliance with the responsibilities as a member and by making the best of the Foundation for regional cooperation.**

Abbreviations

ALF – Anna Lindh Foundation

HoN - Head of the Network

ICD – Intercultural Dialogue

ICE – Intercultural Citizenship Education

UfM – Union for Mediterranean

Euro-Med – Euro Mediterranean

CoE – Council of Europe

MoEFA – Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

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I. Introduction

The national Network of Anna Lindh Foundation in Albania was established in 2008, approximately 14 years ago with the purpose of contributing to the promotion of Intercultural Dialogue in the Euro-Med region.

Since its creation, until recently, the Network in Albania has experienced changes related mostly to the network members and the Heads of the Network (HoN). The first Head of Network, appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the *Albanian Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations (AFALC)*. In February 2020, *AFALC* was replaced as Head of Network by the *Albanian Media Institute*, which was appointed by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs for a mandate of three years.

Coordinated by both HoNs, network members in Albania from 2008 – 2022 have been shrinking and widening in response to the network functioning and activity. However, a large number of organizations that have been members from the beginning, are still active and key contributors in the promotion of Intercultural Dialogue, while new members are joining in this effort.

Based on the latest data available¹ the Network in Albania is composed of 61 member organizations that are based in 12 districts of Albania. Most of the members are from Tirana district covering urban and rural areas, followed by organizations based in Durrës, Fier, Gramsh, Shkodra and Vlora that are also based in urban areas but extend their activities into rural areas as well. The members of the Network come from different backgrounds and have expertise in several sectors including human rights, arts, democracy and community development, religious studies, gender, heritage, media, international/cultural relations, research, youth and education, environment/sustainable development. **The key strength of the Albanian network is the variety of members, disciplines, sectors and areas of expertise that creates a rich structure capable of sharing best practices and experience within our national Network, and with Networks of other countries.**

However, despite the limited data related to the HoNs and the network members, a solid document that describes and explains the journey of the Anna Lindh Foundation Network in Albania, was lacking. In order to fill that void, we conducted this research that would help us to map the journey of the ALF Network in Albania from 2008 – 2022.

This research report offers a review and analysis of the policies and strategies related to intercultural dialogue in Albania and presents the evidence based data gathered from members regarding the impact, interest, contribution and expectation that they have as members of ALF. Additional to that, key suggestions and recommendations are provided for the Foundation, Head of the Network and members with the intention to increase the impact in promoting intercultural dialogue in Euro-Med level.

¹ Last check done on March 25th, 2022

II. Literature and Policy Review

2.1 The Concept of Intercultural Dialogue

There exists no consensus on the use of *intercultural dialogue* in political parlance. Such a term continues to remain rather generic and, as such, is interpreted in different ways.

Nevertheless, several organizations are interested to contribute to adding clarity in understanding the concept of intercultural dialogue. The *Council of Europe (CoE)*², one of the oldest pan-European organizations, is perhaps one of those most relevant political entities which advocates for the need for dialogue between cultures stemming from the continuously evolving and increasingly diverse - not only European - societies.

Rather than simply forced by cross-national migration waves or human rights claims of ethnic minorities, for CoE, recognition of the potential and actual impact of the cross-cultural effects in the times of globalism would contribute towards a better understanding of the inter-dependability between geographical regions and facilitation of advances in communication, media and information. The multicultural mix is part of a new norm, and an increasing number of people must manage and adapt to their multiple cultural identities.

In its “Measuring Intercultural Dialogue” Report³ of 2020, UNESCO recognizes the need for innovative approaches to address the so-called ‘cultural differences’ in the cultural and social capacities that influence the effectiveness of responses the face of persistent global challenges including, among others, inequality, divisive populism and xenophobia, migration and displacement, and violent extremism

However, as noted in the European Parliament’s Resolution of 19 January 2016 “on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values”⁴, “...culture is not fixed but rather a fluid idea encompassing multiple shared reference points, including language, faith, dress codes, food and drink, and traditional arts and crafts”.

At the core of this discourse lies the possibility for increased self-knowledge which is the first step in beginning to understand the “other”. Accepted intercultural theory suggests that we learn most about ourselves when we see ourselves reflected in others. Knowing oneself is important for self-confidence and the development of social skills, all of which can help the process of integration as well as prepare one for active citizenship, provided support mechanisms are in place. Furthermore, *a meaningful intercultural dialogue requires solid knowledge of one’s own and other cultures*⁵.

² https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp#P12_1420

³ Measuring Intercultural Dialogue - A Conceptual and Technical Framework, published in 2020 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France and the Institute for Economics and Peace, 205 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, Sydney, 2065 NSW, Australia <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373442.locale=en>

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

⁵ idem

What is Culture?

Culture consists of the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, including language, religion, cuisine, social customs, music, and arts.

Culture contains common patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive and perception constructs that are learned from socialization. Thus, it can be seen as enhancing the identity of a group driven by social models unique to the group.

For the Council of Europe, the general objective of intercultural dialogue is *to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging*. Furthermore, *intercultural dialogue can also be a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts by enhancing the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law*⁶.

In an effort of bringing in the focus of intercultural dialogue, the need to communicate and exchange between representatives of different cultures, the CoE has produced this definition:

“Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception”

(CoE, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue)⁷

As for the EU, the Parliament’s Resolution⁸ of 19 January 2016, *“encourages all stakeholders to establish an up-to-date, clear, policy-related definition of intercultural dialogue, to implement or harmonize methods, quality criteria and indicators with a view to evaluating the impact of intercultural dialogue programs and projects, and to research methodologies for intercultural comparisons”*.

2.2 Encouraging Intercultural Dialogue for Peace, Progress and Social Development

The dialogue between cultures is not a new concept. It has historically been witnessed to work as a bridge between conflicting parties with peace and mutual development as the final outcome. When carried out with respect to the other, it represents significant potential to advance societies.

For UNESCO⁹, *it is increasingly evident that the success of our government systems, schools and economy depends on harnessing and maximizing the benefit of the growing diversity of*

⁶ https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp#P12_1420

⁷ https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper_EN.asp#TopOfPage

⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

⁹ Measuring Intercultural Dialogue - A Conceptual and Technical Framework, published in 2020 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France and the Institute for Economics and Peace, 205 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, Sydney, 2065 NSW, Australia <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373442.locale=en>

backgrounds and perspectives in societies, and on improving communication between and across them.

“(Intercultural Dialogue) – a broad label for many forms of contact, exchange and interaction that facilitate learning and transformative change across real and perceived boundaries between groups and individuals of different ‘cultures’ or identities – is underused as an approach thus far. This is because insufficient evidence exists concerning its effectiveness for creating more peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies, and not enough is understood about the conditions that enable its success”

(Measuring Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO, 2020)¹⁰

Over the last decades, several European countries, in particular Germany and the Scandinavian societies, have sustained a belief that well-managed and mediated cross-cultural exchanges are generally accepted to produce economic and social benefit as well as bear tangible potential for political solutions to conflict. In recent years, these beliefs were further enshrined in EU Parliament’s relevant framework¹¹ which emphasize that *it should be acknowledged that migratory peoples bring with them skills, knowledge, ideas, new approaches, entrepreneurship, and cultural practices that enrich the social fabric of the communities they become part of, and that migration is part of our cultural heritage.*

Accordingly, while a rapid increase in the cultural mix is unavoidably associated with societal and political challenges which do not exclude episodes of intolerance, hatred, discrimination, and racism, addressing these starts by recognizing and discussing their existence and potential to threatened peace and coexistence between cultures.

Some authors posit that actions and active promotion of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism are not sufficient to succeed. Stokke and Lybaek¹² argue that while liberal state multiculturalism risks essentializing minority groups, intercultural dialogue should be combined with *critical* multiculturalism, which, as a social movement, refers to minority struggles to be recognized as equals in relation to the majority.

For the European Union¹³ *addressing the challenges of multiculturalism requires that cultural dialogue and diversity is integrated in a transversal way to all policy areas such as children and youth policy, education, mobility, employment and social affairs, security, and internal affairs as well as women’s rights and gender equality, and regional development.*

According to another organization, Organic Strategies¹⁴, since the culture of dialogue enables the free flow of information, *living a culture of dialogue means building a new foundation for integrated communication and activating your true creative potential.*

¹⁰ idem

¹¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

¹² Stokke, Christian, and Lena Lybaek. “Combining Intercultural Dialogue and Critical Multiculturalism.” *Ethnicities*, vol. 18, no. 1, [Sage Publications, Inc., Sage Publications, Ltd.], 2018, pp. 70–85, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26413998>.

¹³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

¹⁴ <https://organicstrategies.de/en/culture-of-dialogue/>

2.3 Mechanisms, institutions and cooperation platforms encouraging ICD in the Euro-Med

2.3.1 *The European Neighborhood Policy Review and the EU Parliament’s Resolution “on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values”*

The publication of the European Neighborhood Policy review in 2015 highlighted the progress made in regional co-operation. Through this policy, the EU offers its neighbors a privileged relationship, relying on a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development).

In the resolution of 19 January 2016, succeeding the European Neighborhood Policy Review, the EU Parliament¹⁵ emphasizes that “...whereas *specific articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union are of particular importance to intercultural dialogue by promoting equality, non-discrimination, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, freedom of expression and movement, citizenship rights to economic and political participation...*”, still there is a need for “*a greater and more coherent cooperation between different policy structures and subject areas, not just at EU level but also at national and local level*”.

While recognizing that *intercultural dialogue is a tool for inclusive democratic participation and empowerment of citizens*, the resolution further argues that as such, *intercultural dialogue may significantly contribute to the improvement of democracy and the development of greater and deeper inclusivity and sense of belonging*.

The Resolution also makes an appeal for *interfaith dialogue to be considered as a component of intercultural dialogue, and, as such, a precondition for peace, and an essential tool of conflict management, focusing on the dignity of the individual and on the need to uphold human rights around the world, with particular reference to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and religious minorities’ right to protection*.

In another important remark, the EU Parliament’s Resolution recognizes, amongst others, the key role that the *NGOs, cultural networks and platforms, should continue to play where formal intercultural dialogue structures, policies or programs are less developed*.

The Council of Europe

A quick look into the past and present activities of the Council of Europe, across areas such as education, culture, sports and youth, focus on fostering intercultural dialogue as a means of combating racism and xenophobia, mutual understanding and values such as tolerance, respect for others and participation in society. Due to a long history of actions and research throughout several member states, CoE has created a rich tradition in breaking down the knowledge in intercultural dialogue into good practice manuals and resources such as the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends¹⁶

¹⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

¹⁶ <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/>

The Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Process

It is well-documented that the Mediterranean region has largely contributed to the promotion of coexistence of cultures and religions in history. Between both the northern and southern shores, communities and cultures have always exchanged ideas, trade and learning together.

On 28 November 1995 the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and the 12 southern and eastern Mediterranean countries held the first Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona and signed an agreement to launch the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Process. The Barcelona Process¹⁷ was born as a new framework of dialogue from a vocation to transform the Mediterranean region into a common space for peace, stability, security and common socio-economic progress and dialogue between peoples.

The aim of the Barcelona Process was to strengthen the relations between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries. This expression of good faith and the recognition that closer ties were in everyone's interest would later lead to the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) and of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)

With its headquarters in Alexandria (Egypt), the Anna Lindh Foundation was created in 2004 following a series of early 21st century global events that risked fueling polarization between societies in the Mediterranean region. ALF was the first common institution for dialogue co-created by the European Union and its Mediterranean Partner countries. It was created on the political initiative of the-then President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, "to take action to restart dialogue and defuse the risk of a clash of civilizations".

Originally called the "Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures", the Foundation was given the name of the late Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, who was assassinated in 2003 in an act of hate crime; Anna's lifetime commitment to equal partnership between the North and South, and to multilateral partnership action, became a guiding principle for ALF's work¹⁸. During its first decade, ALF has built the largest South/North network for Mediterranean dialogue, directly involving thousands of young leaders, women entrepreneurs, educators, artists, journalists, researchers, local mayors and policymakers.

ALF's main objectives include promoting intercultural awareness, knowledge and competencies among Euro-Mediterranean societies; addressing intolerance and stereotypes through the promotion of debates, public communication and local initiatives; building the capacity of civil society organizations to partner in trans-Mediterranean exchanges and collaborations; working with decision-makers and the media to strengthen cultural relations and keep them at the heart of the Mediterranean dialogue agenda.

¹⁷ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/25bcnprocess/>

¹⁸ <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/our-story>

One of ALF's most important resources for intercultural dialogue are "The Anna Lindh Education Handbook: Intercultural Citizenship in the Euro Mediterranean Region"¹⁹ and the Young Mediterranean Voices²⁰ project.

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organization which brings together all countries of the European Union and 15 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. Its mission is to enhance regional cooperation, dialogue and the implementation of projects and initiatives with tangible impact on our citizens, with an emphasis on young people and women, to address the three strategic objectives of the region: stability, human development and integration.

One of the goals of the establishment of this institution was in support of the creation and development of the Euro-Mediterranean region. However, critics consider UfM's insistence on focusing on collaborating with private actors and mainly through technical cooperation as a neo-functionalist approach and this project as highly technocratic and not too political. However, at the initial Marseille conference, the European political wing wanted the issues to be addressed by the UfM not to be limited to economic ones.

Strengthening the two main regional centers for Euro-Mediterranean higher education

In December 2014, the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (EMUF) was opened. EMUF was previously approved as a higher education center by the UfM Member States in 2012 and earlier the UNIMED University was inaugurated in 2008 in Piran, Slovenia. EMUF University now functions as a regional center of excellence with a unique eco-campus in the region. UNIMED²¹ University offers an extensive network of over 130 Universities from over 30 Euro-Mediterranean countries.

2.4 Albania's role and involvement in the Euro-Med platforms for Intercultural Dialogue

According to Besnik Mustafaj²², the country's interest to engage in the platforms promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation, created in the framework of the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Process date back in 2005.

"When I had just been appointed as a minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, back in 2005, being well-acquainted with the Mediterranean region's common history and mutual impact on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, I was interested to see Albania becoming a member

¹⁹ https://www.annalindhoundation.org/sites/annalindh.org/files/documents/page/education_handbook_pages_2_-_3_-_2017.pdf and <https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-online-library/anna-lindh-education-handbook-intercultural-citizenship-euro>

²⁰ <https://www.britishcouncil.io/en/programmes/society/young-mediterranean-voices>

²¹ <https://www.uni-med.net/>

²² former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania (2005-2007) and President of the Albanian Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations (AFALC), the Head of the Albanian ALF Network and Albanian member of the ALF Advisory council (2008-2011)

to both the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Union for the Mediterranean which was created later (in 2008). I was particularly instrumental in persuading the Albanian government of that time for the country to join the UfM as a member. Later, when not in politics any longer, I was the president of a CSO which was nominated as the Head of Albanian ALF network”

(Interview with Besnik Mustafaj, February 2022)

Nevertheless, despite Mr Mustafaj’s understanding of Albania’s strong links, shared history and common past and present with both the European and the Mediterranean cultures, Albania’s role in the Mediterranean affairs was often seen with skepticism by the high levels of Albanian government officials. According to Mustafaj, *“there was a naïve fear of creating a perception that Albania was diverting from its EU integration path and was moving toward the East and that, on one hand, this could be used for political gain by the political adversaries – as was the case when Albania earlier joined the Islamic Conference – and, on the other, that Albania’s intentions could be misinterpreted by the European partners”*²³.

In the framework of ALF’s ‘Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges’ Initiative, the Albanian Network was involved in launching ‘Play for Peace’ which brought together children and teenagers from several schools of Tirana; the project involved young participants in sports, cultural and leisure activities as a way to foster dialogue between youth from different marginalized groups, such as Roma, orphan children and representatives of different religious communities.

The Albanian Network members also launched a number of national initiatives with ALF network support, including: the publication entitled ‘Women and Religion’ on the role of women in the three major religious communities and socio-political life, and ‘Cultures Talk’, an open forum and campaign.

The initiative ‘Open Forum’ (2014) explored issues of cultural identity of Albanian migrants in EuroMed countries. In 2012, members were involved in ‘Mediterranean Network: Step One Lampedusa’, which included research on issues of Albanian immigrants in Italy.

The same year, the ALF’s regional meeting on ‘Prospects for Inter-Religious Coexistence’, officially inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Albania, was co-organized by the Head of Network in Tirana. The Albanian Network members have also launched the publication entitled ‘Women and Religion’ on the role of women in the three major religious communities and socio-political life, along with the campaign ‘Cultures Talk’.

The Albanian Network was part of the ‘Kīmiyya, Women Actresses of Dialogue’ (2017) Cross-Network Activity conference that gathered 150 representatives from 12 National Networks of the ALF.

The Anna Lindh Review 2005-2011 and the Anna Lindh Foundation 15-Year Review 2005-2020²⁴

Since the year 2020, the Albanian network has been coordinated by the Albanian Media Institute (AMI). The focus has been on intercultural dialogue across the fields of human rights, media, research, diversity and education.

Since the beginning of its term as a HoN, AMI’s efforts have been put on the revitalization and reactivation of the Network which had been silent for some years, resulting in 45 active members in 2020 coming from different backgrounds; 30 are based in the Tirana district (both

²³ Interview with Besnik Mustafaj at the Albanian Media Institute in Tirana, Albania, February 2022.

²⁴ Excerpts from the *Anna Lindh Review 2005-2011* and the *Anna Lindh Foundation 15-Year Review 2005-2020*

in urban and rural areas) and 15 are based in the Durres, Shkodra, Fier, Pogradec and Vlora districts. All have expertise in several sectors.

According to Admira Jorgji²⁵, director of the EU department at the Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) which oversees Albania's participation in the Euro-Mediterranean initiatives as part of her several other responsibilities, Albania pays careful attention to this matter. Not less because of the country's renown distinct history of saving all the Jews transiting through Nazi-occupied Albania during the WW2 fleeing the Holocaust. Despite Albanians overwhelmingly identifying with the Muslim faith, not a single Jew was handed over to the occupiers and their local collaborators. *"Still not enough attention has been paid to the subject since WW2"*, admits Jorgji. *"Active participation in the UfM and ALF may be a way to build on our good Albanian practices and share them with the other member countries"*

"Albania's interests concern primarily (Mediterranean) collaboration for energy and economic cooperation, and less so (the area of) intercultural dialogue. But, of course, we are interested in presenting good Albanian practices to our Mediterranean counterparts. After the effects produced by the war in Syria, especially as regards the Syrian refugee crisis, our interest is being renewed."

(Admira Jorgji, Director of EU Department at the MEFA of Albania, 2022)

While not being a strictly legal concept, intercultural dialogue is not regulated by specific national, EU or international law. Nevertheless, it is built on international frameworks aimed at protecting human rights and cultural diversity. According to the European Parliament's Resolution of 19 January 2016 "on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values"²⁶, *"in the context of intercultural dialogue, the application of both universal human rights (as individual rights) and cultural rights (recognizing specific and multiple cultural identities) are essential"*.

The same Resolution, *"calls on the Commission and the Council to adopt intercultural dialogue as a strong and committed political objective of the EU and therefore guarantee EU support through various policy measures, initiatives and funds, including intercultural dialogue with third countries, especially fragile states"*.

Until lately, as admitted by Mr. Mustafaj as the president of ALF's former Head of Albanian Network, the engagement of the Albanian network of Anna Lindh Foundation seems to have been less focused in transmitted the core messages and developing the key skills required for an effective intercultural dialogue but rather on the Foundation as a funding source for the individual network members' actions. According to him, this is partly due to the North-South cooperation not being sufficiently strong and motivating.

²⁵ Director of EU Department at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania (2022)

²⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

“Sometimes, individual members or individual NGOs in or out of the Albanian network would benefit directly from ALF grants without being filtered by the Albanian HoN in advance”, relates Mustafaj. According to him, this is not correct as it weakens the authority of the Head of Network organization.

At the same time, he also admits that the engagement of the former Albanian HoN organization - that he used to preside, but which is not active anymore - with the Albanian network members has been limited. *“Most of the involvement has been about conducting some training and carrying out some information sharing sessions”*. Only occasionally would they (AFALC) help to organize training on project proposal writing which seems to have been crucial to engage in ALF’s grants schemes and to foster partnerships.

The engagement of the government of Albania with ALF has been even less effective. The government ceased to provide its financial contribution to the Foundation about a decade ago. The MEFA representatives did not participate in the ALF statutory meetings either.

“Currently, the engagement in this (Mediterranean) context is a responsibility of MEFA’s Department for Europe. But should it be so?”, ponders Jorgji. *“However, an internal shift of responsibilities has been discussed recently. Not yet clear how they will be re-assigned”,* she wonders. Then reassures: *“Still, in the overall framework of dealing with the Mediterranean affairs, the engagement with UfM remains more of a priority”*.

The EU Parliament’s Resolution of 19 January 2016 “on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values”²⁷, *calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop strategies which recognize intercultural dialogue as a process of interactive communication within and between cultures, to ensure mutual respect and equal opportunities, to deliver and implement effective solutions to tackle the economic and social inequalities and causes of exclusion as well as all forms of discrimination and to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; recalls the key role played by the media, including social media, both as a potential platform for extreme discourses and as a vehicle for countering xenophobic narratives, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices and promoting tolerance.*

²⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0005_EN.html

2.5 Intercultural Dialogue in practice: Fact & Figures from Albania

25 civil society organizations have been involved in the Albanian Network in the beginning while currently the number has increased to 61

13 new projects mobilized by ALF through the '1001 Actions for Dialogue' campaign

45 participants from 21 countries gathered for one of the preparatory meetings of the Anna Lindh Forum in Tirana inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Albania

250 children and teenagers from several schools of Tirana brought together during the 'Play for Peace' project in the framework of the ALF Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges Initiative

7 Albanian civil society organizations represented at the Anna Lindh Forum 2010 in Barcelona

Besnik Mustafaj of Albania is a member of the Advisory Council of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the period 2008 – 2011

Albania Media Institute was appointed as Head of Network of the ALF network in February 2020

The latest national network meeting was held on January 22nd, 2021 and 22 members of the Network attended.

2 Capacity building activities were organized during 2021 for the network members on the topics of ICD and Project Management

A joint online cultural exchange was organized with Albanian and Latvian youngsters on May 30th, 2021.

Albanian HoN (AMI) implemented on a short-term project in cooperation with partners from Spain (AIFED) and Tunisia (WEYouth) entitled "Mind the Language" in the framework of Intercultural Cities and Learning Program.

"Udhëtimi i Lirë"(network member) was the lead of the project "Invisible forewomen" in partnership with Slovenia, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt

4 youths participated in the literary contest "Sea of Words" during 2021

1 network member representative (Youth Voice Organizations) took part in the ToT on Intercultural Citizenship Education organized by ALF

2 Talented youth from Albania participated in the "The Gap" art exhibition organized by the Austrian Network of the ALF, and their work was published online.

Tens of members have participated in online trainings organized by ALF, or other networks.

III. Methodology

3.1 Goal and objectives

The main goal of this research is to shed light and to give a comprehensive outline of the ALF Network' journey in Albania since the creation of the Network in 2008 until recently (2022), focusing on the impact of the ALF presence in the promotion of intercultural dialogue in general and Foundations role in increasing capacities of National networks and cooperation in the Euro-Med level.

The objectives of this research have been thoroughly conceptualized to cover all the components of the main goal.

In this regard, the objectives are to:

- Offer a general review of the policies and strategies for the promotion of the ICD
- Analyze member's interests and expectations from the ALF Network;
- Reflect on contributions and benefits of the members from the ALF network;
- Identify the members' awareness and knowledge on ICD;
- Discuss the impact that ALF Network has had on members' perceptions about ICD
- Explore the members' cooperation at the national and Euro Med level;
- Elaborate on members' perspective in regard to their membership status in the future.

3.2 Participants

This research targeted first of all network members in Albania, who contributed by completing the online questionnaire (30) and participating in in depth interviews (10). In total 31 network members have participated in this research, which based on the total number of members comprises 50%, and that is a satisfactory rate considering the level of engagement of the members in the Network.

Additional to network members, in-depth interviews were conducted with Mr. Besnik Mustafaj, the former HoN, and with Ms. Admira Jorgji, the Director of Europe at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Overall, **30 participants participated in this research by completing the questionnaire and 12 others contributed through in depth-interviews.**

3.3 Data gathering instruments

For the purpose of the research, two data gathering instruments were developed by the experts in cooperation with the HoN. The first instrument was the questionnaire for network

members, designed and shared online via e-mail and social media, and the second was the semi-structured interview for the in-depth interviews.

Questionnaire contained 33 questions organized in four sections. The first section had questions that gathered general information on members (the year of the membership to the foundation, the main field of action, etc). The second section contained questions that gathered information on the impact of the ALF Network for the promotion of the ICD in Albania. The third section on the other and had questions regarding the support and enhancement of network members, while the fourth section was gathering information on the role of the ALF in strengthening and extending the inter-regional cooperation. All sections contained closed and open ended questions, with the intention to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

The semi-structured interview contained a list of 21 open-ended questions that were designed to gather in-depth information regarding the presence of the ALF in Albania, the role of the HoN in coordinating the network, the role of the network members in the network activation and the promotion of the ICD, the use of the ICD resource center and the Euro-Med partnerships.

Additional to the primary data gathered through these instruments, secondary data were gathered through ALF website, reviews, and reports. Those secondary data comprise a key input for the report.

3.4 Data gathering process

The process of gathering secondary and primary data has been a challenge considering the limited time in disposal. The data were gathered from February 18th to – March 12th. Briefly, the process was as follows:

February 18th – February 28th, 2022: Collection and desk reviewing of relevant documents. The researchers conducted a desk review of secondary sources that were put in disposal by the Secretariat of the Anna Lindh Foundation; were available in the website, or that the researchers found via other sources.

February 18th – February 28th: dissemination and completion of the questionnaire by 30 members of the Albanian Network. Members had to be contacted several times via different platforms to complete the questionnaire.

February 24th – March 12th: Semi-structured in-depth interviews with Mr. Musafaj and Ms. Jorgji, as well as with 10 network members. Interviews were conducted face to face when possible and online via (Zoom and Skype). The interviews lasted around 30 minutes to 1 hour. Data gathered via interviews were transcribed in case of the members, and note keeping was used for the interviews with Mr. Mustafaj and Ms. Jorgji. The interviews allowed us to collect a large amount of information that was helpful to explain some of the results of the questionnaire.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis has been the most crucial part of this research as it is a continuation of the data collection process. After all the data were gathered, they were subject to being processed and analyzed. Content analysis was done for the secondary data, while descriptive statistics (for quantitative data) and content analysis (qualitative data) was done for the analysis of the primary data gathered via questionnaires and interviews.

Descriptive statistics were used to interpreting and analyzing the data gathered in order to extract insights on the key sections of this research, in particular to identify the trends in the Albanian Network of ALF, and diagnostic when going deeper in the 'whys' of the research and prescriptive when covering the 'what will happen' part (i.e when asking the members whether they will remain part of the network for example). Data are presented through graphics, quotations from the in-depth interviews, and text analysis where citations of the interviewees have been used to generate useful insights for diverse questions.

3.6 Research limitations

This research has some limitations which are also reflected encountered to some extent in the findings section of the report. **The limitations are related to the limited sources of information.** That is noted in several levels, government, former HoN and members are a scarce source of information. When interviewed, some of the members expressed that many members face the 'lack of memory' in terms of their journey with ALF as the information it is gone with the change of staff, which makes it difficult for them to give accurate information.

Second limitation it is related **to the lack of familiarity with the ALF and the Euro-Med partnership.** Most of the interviewed members, but also the ones who filled out the questionnaire, stated that they hadn't have partnerships with members from the 41 Networks which eventually restricts the input given for the research.

The largest share of the members participating the research had never been part of an ALF funded project neither as a lead nor as a partner. If they would have been part of any project within the frame of ALF programs, they would have better understanding and clearer picture of the ALF and therefore elaborate more in this regard, because it was noticed that for several questions they had to skip it as 'not applicable' for them.

Time for conducting research was short and even though the initially set target was reached (to get engaged 30 members in the survey), we would have preferred all the members to take part in this survey. Unfortunately, the timeline, obliged us to set a short deadline for the members to fill out the questionnaire.

IV. Results

This section presents the key results from the research, organizing them in three main pillars, including the presence of the ALF and its role in supporting the capacity building of the network members, ALF and the promotion of the Intercultural dialogue in Albania, and ALF as a catalyst for partnerships in Euro-Med level. Prior to these three pillars, some general results will be provided regarding those who participated in the research.

4.1 General information on participants

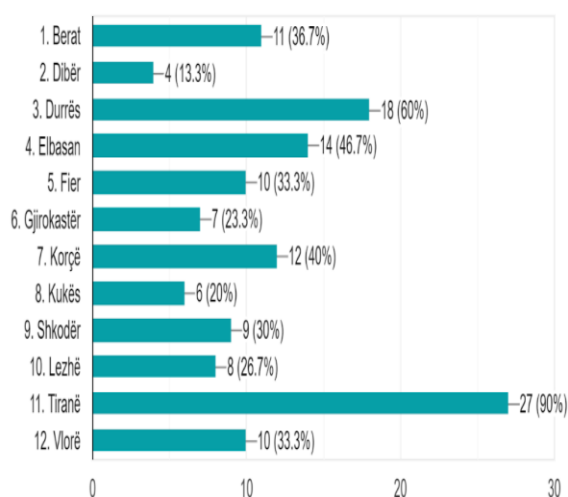
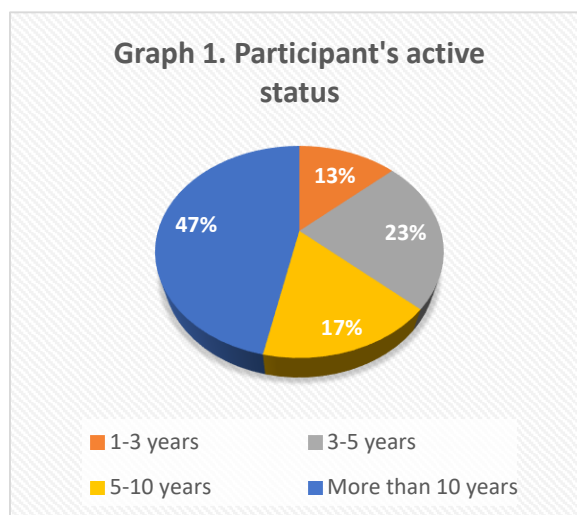
Out of 30 organizations that completed the questionnaire, **23.3% of them were members of the ALF since 2021, 13.3% since 2020, while the others were 10% (2009), 10% (2015), 10% (2017), 10% (2022)**. Lesser in % were members that became part of the network on 2012, 2013, 2014. The participation of respondents who have been members of the ALF since its creation it is encouraging and it shows that these members are still interested in the Network and willing to contribute, while on the other hand it reveals that the new members are more eager to contribute actively to the Network, taking into account the data collection process. New members were contacted once and they completed the questionnaire right away, while the eldest members were contacted several times in order to respond. This can be explained by several factors, not necessarily related to the Network per se, for example time restrictions, however **it falls on the responsibility of all members to respond to the Network, regardless of other engagements that they have.**

The majority of member organizations have stated that their legal status is national NGO, local NGOs whilst a limited number of members are identified as Foundation or branch of international NGO. **These data show that the members of the Network are 100% CSOs and NGOs, and 0% individuals and 0% Government Organizations/Institutions.** Based on the Network Internal Rules, the Albanian network it is open for membership to individuals and public/government institutions, and furthermore it encourages it in order to have a comprehensive network.

When it comes to the priority actions of the organizations, the respondents had to select more than one priority area based on the mission and vision of their organization. Therefore, the **most selected priority areas where the respondents focus their actions are 73.3% intercultural citizenship education, 66.7% mobilization of the civil society for diversity promotion, 53.3% respectively per each of the following SDG, art and culture, youth mobility and employment, women's rights and gender stereotypes.** The **least covered priority areas are interfaith dialogue (20%), migrants, refugees and community relations (23.3%) and culture in the euro-med (10%).**

These results show that all the members of the ALF network in Albania are fully in line with the priority areas of the Foundation, with some of them being well covered by our members and some being less covered. However, it is important to emphasize that members cover various themes in their work, not only one of them. The inference that may be drawn in respect to this is that the organizations have widen their scope of work to have bigger opportunities to financially sustain but also to cover the 'urging' needs of the Albanian society.

Majority of the participants (47%) have been exercising their activity for more than 10 years, followed by 23% who have been active for 3-5 years and 17% for 5-10 years. The remaining 13% of the respondents have been active in the CSOs sector for 1-3 years. The results as shown in the graph indicate that **the members of the Network are consolidated organizations, sustainable, active and experienced** which emphasizes the potential of the network within the country and in the Euro-Med.



In terms of outreach, participants were asked in which districts do they extend their action, and they had to select all options that were applicable. **The most selected option was Tirana (90%), Durrës (60%), Elbasan (46.7%) and Korça (40%).** While the remaining as showed in the graph. This result it is not surprising considering that the majority of members are registered in Tirana district, however it is also related to the large number of population that lives in these regions. **Important to emphasize is that members are present in 12 districts in Albania.**

4.2 The presence and role of the ALF for the capacity building of network members

The members of the ALF in Albania are mainly located in Tirana. Some organization have branches or implement activities in all districts but vast majority operate in Tirana district. This creates sort of geographical gap in regard to the presence of ALF in those areas where might be a greater need for interventions and where the ALF presence may bring its positive impact. As one of the respondents claimed *“more focus should be given to the local organizations outside of Tirana, in order to have wider geographical presence, where is not spoken about the ICD or any other ALF related topics”*.

Irrespective their level of engagement in the National Network, all the members surveyed consider the presence of Anna Lindh Foundation in Albania as very important for multiple and different reasons.

Among the answers given, we could extract the followings:

S.Z on behalf of 'Young Professional Network' said: *'because it involves Albania as part of the Euro-Med region as geographically we are part of it, but also culturally'*.

For this same question, M.M the founder of "Udhëtim i Lirë" portrayed the presence of the ALF *'Especially at the very beginning, when the ALF was established in Albania it was very important, but then for some years it moved to an inactive status and barely you could hear about it, but now with the revitalization thanks to the new HoN-The Albanian Media Institute-the ALF stands as an added value in our context'*.

A.P representative of 'Act for Society' elaborated: *'The ALF is present in so many countries and it has its own strategic importance, but in the Albanian context the Network has not been functioning properly and we, as members, should feel more the real presence of the Network'*.

N.J representative of 'Qendra Epoka e Re' explained: *'We became part of the Network since the very beginning when the ALF was established in Albania, seeing it as a potential Network that would allow us to grow, exchange good practices and experiences, more cooperation and funding opportunities etc. But, alas, for many reasons which we are not aware of, the Network ceased to be active for many years until we got a call from the new HoN, which awakened our hope that the Network will be revived'*.

Seemingly they have same approach in regard to partaking in the Albanian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, albeit more should be done. They claim to have experienced the lack of the real presence of the ALF in Albania, that *'the ALF it is present, but at the same time it is not'*. Asked about *'What drove you to become member of the Albanian ALF Network?'*, the most common answers encapsulating this question are:

'good reputation and the fact that thousands of organizations are part of it, it makes it even more reliable'; *'being part of a big network such as the ALF, it allows you to expand your connections, more partnership opportunities but also more chances of financing which is important for us as NGOs'*.

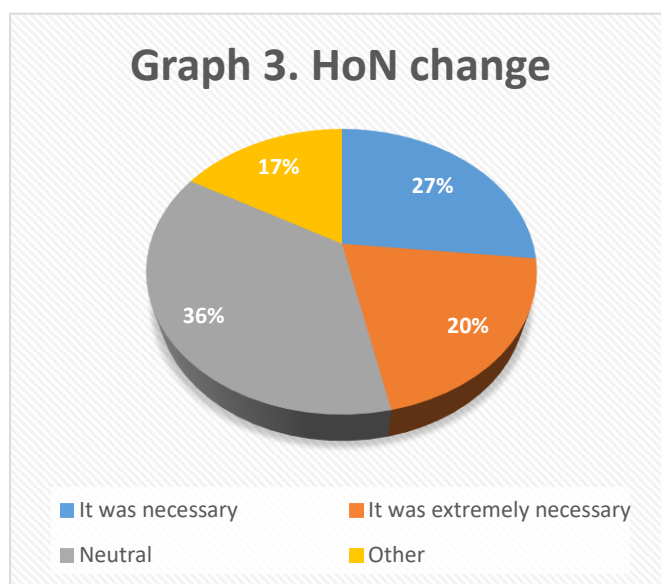
Summarized, the motivation of the members to being part of the ALF are related to having *"more visibility at international level; 'more funding opportunities'; 'exchange of good practices'; 'expansion of collaborations and partnerships; 'increasing working capacities' etc.;*

Asked whether their expectations had changed after becoming members, 70% of them answered 'No' and the remaining 30% claimed to have changed their expectations. In regard to this, the research data identified an association between the years of membership and their change of expectations after becoming part of the Network. Thus, the members with over 10 years in the Network hadn't changed their expectations which also explains why they still remain in the Network. Although, during the interview with two different members, their expectations had decreased throughout the years, but they remain part of the Network due to the good reputation that the ALF has and because they hope to have possibilities of funding or cooperation in the future.

The research tried to look closer the views of members who had experienced change in their expectations, in order to better understand the nature of this change. They were asked to elaborate on how their expectations had changed and few of them claimed to have changed their expectations, but in terms of reinforcing their beliefs in the Network membership. Some of members said that this positive change in their expectations and their decision to stay part of the Network came due to the ‘revitalization of the Network’ in the past two years as they had witnessed a ‘sleepy network’ for several years.

N.J from ‘Qendra Epoka e Re’ added that *‘Even the persistence to engage us as ‘Epoka e Re’ in this research to share our thoughts and views is a good sign that the Network will start to move from its inactive status. And if you have faced indifference from other members in participating in any activity or in this concrete research is also because their belief in the Network has been vanished. But as I said, even these small steps will encourage them to get engaged’.*

The research attempted to link this feedback also with the HoN work and contribution in coordinating the National Network. Asked whether they consider it important and relevant the change of the HoN of the Albanian Network.



Evidently, the data show this change has been positive, well received and the expectations from the members are that it will generate better cooperation, encourage the active participation of the members and awaken the network after a period of ‘inactive status’.

It shouldn’t be left unmentioned that, whether their expectations of being an ALF member had changed or not throughout the years, asked if they will continue to be part of the ALF Network in Albania, **all the respondents unanimously have answered “yes”**. And

the reasons for that are as different as complex at the same time:

- *‘We believe in increasing the good cooperation and partnerships within the Network’;*
- *‘The Network shall help us strengthen our working capacities’;*
- *‘Because we expect the Network to be more active and encourage the interaction between its members’;*
- *‘Our field of work matches with the priority areas of the ALF and also because we see the potential of Network especially in broadening the partnership in the Euro-Med region’;*

After gathering information about the member's views and feedback on the ALF Network, the research made close observations in regard to the benefits of the members from the ALF Network.

During the interviews the members elaborated on this question as follows:

E.B Executive Director of "Qendra Shqiptare për Studime Orientale (Albanian Center for Oriental Studies)" when talking about benefits voiced out: *'We are member since 2009, and have to admit that the 'benefits' have been of different nature, but I would underline especially the good connections. We have got to know many people, good friends, experts with whom we have collaborated and done good work together. Taking part in various meetings initiated by ALF such as ALF Forums in Barcelona 2010 and Marseille 2012 and in another meeting in Alexandria 2012. Besides, I have been guest speaker in some of the meetings organized in Tirana'.*

Another member, A.A representing "Partners Albania" on the same matter continued: *'Our benefits are mainly related to the exchange of information and knowledge. We would have liked to have had the chance to also implements projects, but the open calls from ALF have been limited in both: number and thematic.'*

M.M from "Udhëtim i Lirë" said *'We have been part of two trainings, personally have been invited by the actual HoN to facilitate one of the TC on capacity building and above all, we have been granted a project in 2020 for which we are very much grateful for the trust but also very much proud of the results achieved'.*

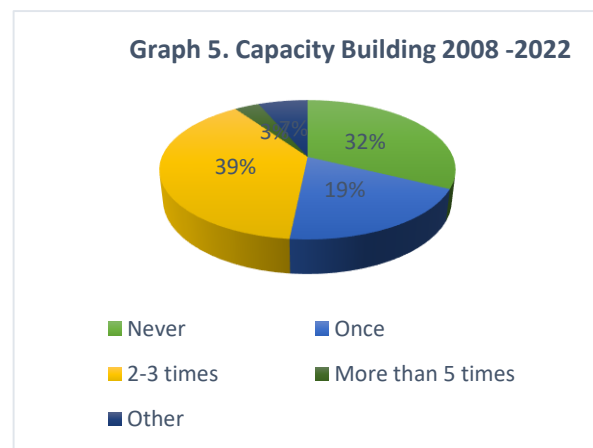
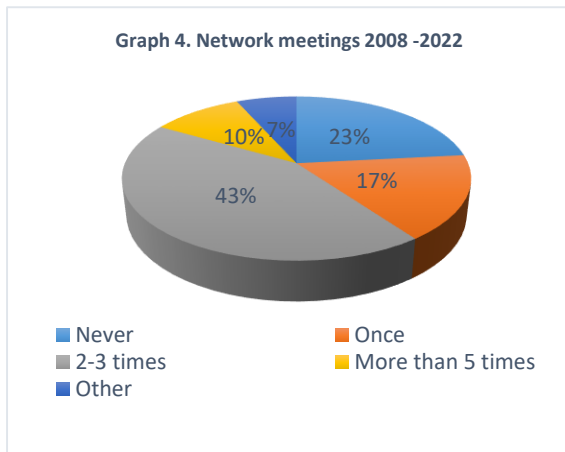
While the main benefits listed from the members in the questionnaire are as below:

- Exchanging of experiences and good practices with other members;
- Attending online TCs or conferences, ToT;
- Partnerships with other ALF members;
- Information on ICD and accessing relevant information about trends within the ALF Network and beyond;
- More visibility;
- No other benefits except of exchanging information.

Members participating in the research, in a separate section were asked to elaborate on their engagement and contribution to the Network.

Concerning the participation in the activities organized by the HoN we asked them *'From 2008 to 2022 in how many Members Meeting have you participated?'* and *'From 2008 to 2022 in how many Capacity Building have you participated?'*

The answers were respectively as shown in the graphs below. The majority 43% had participated in 2-3 network meetings, followed by 23% who had not participated and 17% who have participated 1 time and 10% more than 5 times. The % “never attended a network meeting” corresponds to the new members who were added between February 2021 and February 2022.



While as per the capacity building activities that they took part, 39% of respondents had participated in 2-3 capacity building activities, 32% never, 19% and the remaining more than 5 times. For the new members it is important to add that there were no CB taking place therefore this question was not applicable to them.

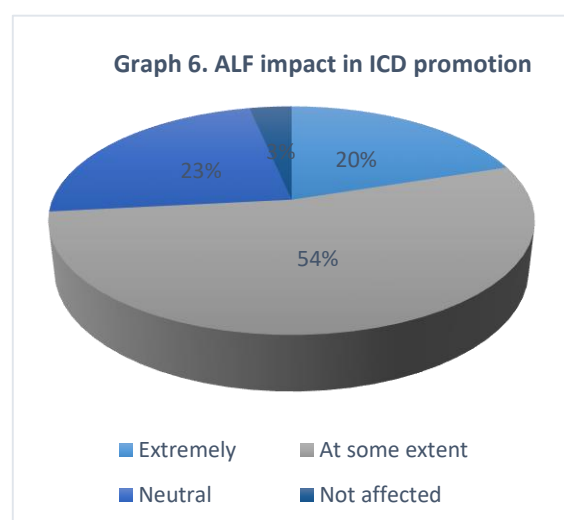
4.3 ALF and the promotion of intercultural dialogue in Albania

An integral part of this research is exploring the intercultural dialogue in Albania throughout the years that the ALF Network has been present.

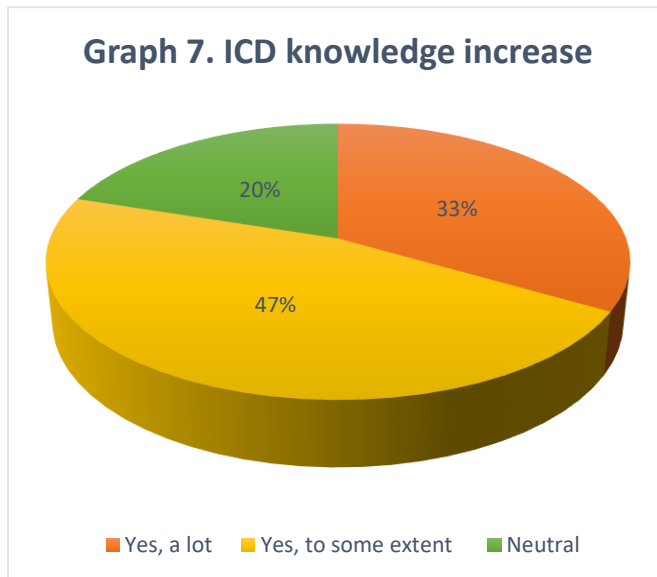
Through the questionnaire and in-depth interviews has been attempted to come up with a clear picture of the main ICD trends within the society in the Albanian context.

When identifying the priority areas of work of the members participating in this survey, it is seen that (100%) explore the field of ICD/ICE, interfaith dialogue and Euro-Med cultures. After mapping this area, we tried to contextualize the opinions of the respondents by concretely asking whether they believe that the ALF Network has influenced the promotion of ICD in Albania.

20% of the members involved in the survey have stated that the ALF Network has



influenced a lot, whilst 54% believe that it has influenced somehow. Many of them believe that this comes due to the fact that ICD being among the core focus thematic of the ALF, which consequently leads to make people more aware of it even if they hadn't heard about it before.



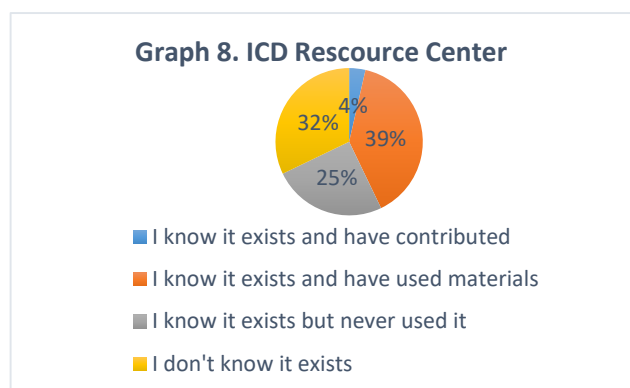
Linked to the above question, the respondents have been asked whether their involvement in the ALF Network has influenced their engagement in projects or initiatives or even simply to learn more about the ICD. To this question 'Have you increased your knowledge on ICD after becoming part of the ALF Network', 33% have stated that they have increased their knowledge a lot, 47% have increased their knowledge at some extent, whilst 20% have responded that their knowledge hasn't changed or been affected.

During the interview, M.D founder of "Social and Culture Initiative: The Good Psychology" said: "Becoming part of the ALF Network and then getting to learn about the ALF fields of work, made me go and search more about the ICD. So it has been eye-opening if I may say so. In our organization we are focused a lot on art and culture, but now with the positive influence of the ALF, I'm thinking to include the ICD in the prospect activities or projects. And I believe it's needed here in Albania".

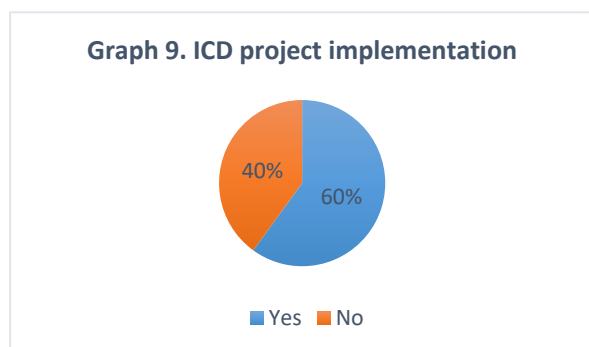
Another member M.M, founder of "Udhëtim i Lirë", expressed that "After becoming member of the ALF we had the chance to participate in a TC where we gained more knowledge which helped us to generate new ideas for projects or integrate them in our ongoing ones".

E.K representative of "EDYN" mentioned that: "The vision of our organization is focused on political dialogue yet I have to say that now we seriously contemplate to broaden our work in (inter)cultural dialogue as we find the Network as a source of valuable information, but also as a source of good initiatives within the frame of ICD. We have so recently joined the Network, therefore we haven't turn any idea into action, but the expectations are high".

During the research when looking at the members' knowledge on ICD, attention was paid also to the [ALF Resource Hub](#). Thus the members were asked if they had used it to get more knowledge on ICD.



The data show that 39% were aware of it and had used it to search for information there, 25% stated that they were aware of the hub but never used it nor contributed with materials, and 32% had no knowledge about the hub itself, and only one member had contributed with submission of materials on ICD.



Asked whether they have implemented any project where the core thematic has been ICD or interlinked to another thematic, the 60% of them answered “Yes” and 40% “No”. The survey data show that in all these implemented projects, the ICD has been combined with other thematic in the frame of the same project.

The remaining 40% were further asked “Would you get involved or implement in a project the main topic of which would be ICD? If yes, why?”

All the respondents have unequivocally answered ‘Yes’ and the reason for this are as follows:

“Yes, I would get involved as people especially youth should increasingly be more aware about the ICD, the diversity in our society so that they become more inclusive, respectful towards others irrespective of their ethnicity, race or community”.

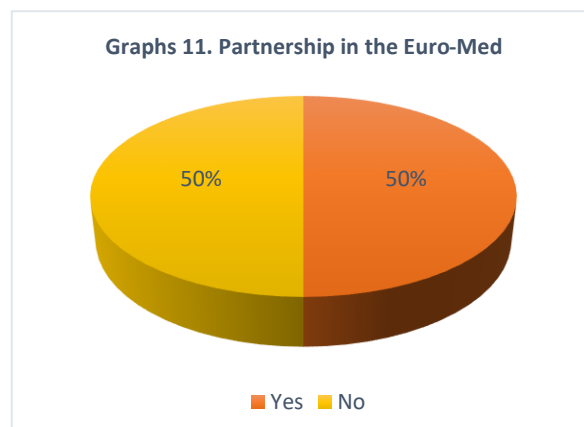
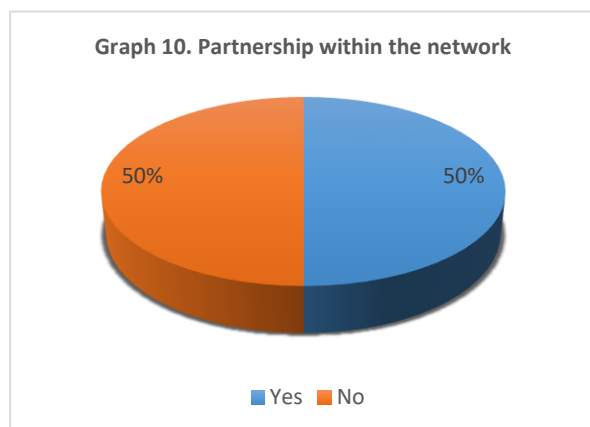
“Our organization would prefer to get engaged in projects that address issues related to the ICD so that we can promote social justice, social inclusion and social sustainability”.

The members were asked to share their recommendations and suggestions on how to encourage and promote the Intercultural Dialogue at national level. Some of the recommendation worth sharing are:

- Sharing quick and catchy information on ICD which is easily accessible by everyone;
- Organizing info sessions with youngsters, representatives from marginalized communities, actors of civil society sector etc;
- Preparation and dissemination of raising awareness videos where sharing information about the ICD;
- Offering financial support to the initiatives that aim to promote ICD which at the same time engage various actors and stakeholders. This will encourage more acceptance and tolerance among people of different backgrounds;
- Offering more training opportunities for educators a.k.a ToT to increase their capacities and competences to deliver activities and workshops to their working beneficiaries i.e. young people;
- Providing opportunities to learn and actively practice ICD in educational institutions such as schools so that the young people/students become more aware and interiorize the values of ICD.

4.4 ALF as a catalyst for the cooperation in the Euro Med level

As mentioned at the 'Research Limitations' section, 50% of the members haven't had any cooperation with other members at national level, and 50% haven't had cooperation or partnership in Euro-Med level. The members in here are split in half, where the ones benefiting from the partnerships are the eldest in the network and the ones being established just recently still need to expand their partnerships. The Network it is a very helpful tool in this regard, either for national partnerships as well as Euro-Med ones.



In the questionnaire, to the question 'Has the membership in ALF helped you to establish partnerships with NGOs that are part of the 41 Networks?' Out of 30 respondents, only 14 of them had answered yes, while the rest hadn't cooperated with any other organization within the other 41 ALF Networks.

After receiving this results from the questionnaires, the research tried to get a better understanding of this matrix during the in-depth interviews with 10 of the members. Thus, among 10 in-depth interviews with the members only one of them had experience of cooperation with other members from other 41 ALF Networks.

This collaboration had indeed happened within an ALF funded project where the member of the Albanian Network 'Udhëtim i Lirë' was in the role of the project lead. Asked to elaborate more on this experience, the representative of 'Udhëtim i Lirë' M.M further added *'for this project "The Invisible Forewomen", I had a very smooth and fruitful cooperation with ALF members from Slovenia, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey and I would again work with them as we had great results, beyond the initial set targets and expectations and we are very glad about that'*.

Despite the fact that ALF members of Albanian Network, hadn't experienced so far any cooperation with members of the other 41 Networks, they do consider the ALF as a catalyst for the promotion of good partnership at Euro-Med level. In order to promote and encourage more the latter, the interviewees suggest the following:

E.N founder of "Qendra Shqiptare per Zhvillimin e Familjes" said that: *"the ALF should initiate more activities aiming to foster the cooperation at Euro-Med level such as: - study visits; seminars; workshops addressing common Euro-Mediterranean issues, annual meetings with the members; partnership building activities"* and as a good practice of ALF for the encouragement of the partnership at Euro-Med level she considers *'giving priority to the*

member organizations which work on promotion of ICD, diversity and mutual respect between Euro-Med societies’.

Of the same opinion is S.Z from “Young Professional Network” when she states that: *“The ALF should organize more round-tables or meetings inviting members from all Networks, for the members to get to know and possible set up new partnerships”.*

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Undeniably, the research and its main takeaways has provided us with useful input and reflections that will contribute towards making the Albanian National Network more vivid and active, and to eventually work for strengthening and sharing values that the Anna Lindh Foundation promotes. **A prominent conclusion of this research study that has to be conveyed is that there should be a contribution of all parties involved: members, HoNs, donors’ government institutions to keep the Network alive and active, and should be understood that all these parties cohabitate in a symbiotic relationship where they complement each other in order to make the Network function as whole.**

This review is based on 30 questionnaires and 12 in-depth interviews with former HoN, representative of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, and members of Albanian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation on: the impact that the membership on the Network has had on the members, and overall for the promotion of the intercultural dialogue in Albania; how the members have been supported to strengthen their capacities; how has been fostered the strengthening and widening of the cooperation at national and at Euro-Med level.

The respondents have provided with useful insights and suggestions on the above-mentioned pillars.

The review has identified the following recommendations:

- **The ALF is an intergovernmental organization and a Network of Networks, and as a state member the government of the Albania, through the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, has a series of obligations that it must fulfill, including the payment of the annual fee, participation in the meetings of the Board of Governors, engaging a point of contact to maintain communication with the Foundation and represent the government institution in regional meetings.**
- **Members suggest that the ALF should be promoted more in Albania and to be more geographically represented in other areas additional to Tirana, Durrës and Elbasan.** Despite the fact that the network members cover 12 regions in Albania, some of the regions are overrepresented and the others underrepresented. Outreaching all districts equally could increase the capacities of network members, and the extend the knowledge of ICD on the general population.

- More initiatives that foster and encourage partnership at Euro-Med level should be fostered and encouraged. The members feel they didn't have the chance to get to know other members of the 41 networks. They suggest that even some partners meeting, round tables or info sessions meeting should be carried out time to time for organizations to meet and potentially establish partnerships.
- In the Albanian context it is needed more awareness on intercultural dialogue but to date there is a lack of presence of programs, projects, activities on ICD. Firstly, the organizations haven't implemented activities or projects addressing ICD which is translated also in less awareness in public.
- More investment should be done to revitalize the Network in terms of funding opportunities which will eventually will increase their working capacities for the ALF programs and key thematic areas.

All in all, the research **underscores** that the majority of the members surveyed continue to believe in the importance of strengthening the Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation in Albania, as it generates many **new opportunities**, enhances **good cooperation** and it further **promotes dialogue** across the Mediterranean.

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VII. Appendices

7.1 Questionnaire

General information

1. The person responsible filling in this questionnaire
2. Name of the organization
3. Mobile nr
4. In which year your organization became part of ALF Network in Albania
5. The ALF work is focused in several priority areas. In which of these areas does your organization operates:
 - a) Interfaith dialogue
 - b) Migrants/refugees and host community relations
 - c) Civil Society action for diversity management promotion
 - d) Euro-Med cultures e) Intercultural Citizenship Education
 - f) promotion of SDG and ICD
 - g) art and culture h) mobility and employment of youth
 - i) women's right and gender stereotypes
6. What is the legal status of your organization?
 - a) NGO/Center- National
 - b) NGO/Center- Local
 - c) Public body
 - d) Foundation
 - e) Branch of international NGO
7. For how long your organization has been operative/active?
 - a) less than a year
 - b) 1-3 years
 - c) 3-5 years
 - d) 5-10 years
 - e) more than 10 years
8. In which of the counties your projects/activities of your institution have been concentrated?

Berat, Dibër, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastrë, Korçë, Kukës, Shkodër, Lezhë, Tiranë, Vlorë

Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue in Albania

9. In your opinion, how has the ALF Network in the promotion of ICD in Albania from 2008 to 2022?
 - a) very much
 - b) somehow
 - c) neutral

- d) not influenced
 - e) not influenced at all
10. Have you gained/expanded your knowledge on ICD after joining the ALF Network?
 - a) yes, very much
 - b) yes, somehow
 - c) neutral
 - d) a little
 - e) not at all
 11. Have you implemented any program or project which directly addresses or contributes to the ICD?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
 12. If Yes, describe shortly the program/project(short summary);
 13. If No, would you get involved in project that addresses ICD? Why?
 14. What could ALF do more to promote the ICD? Write down your ideas/suggestions
 15. The ALF has a Resource Hub on ICD where public can access educational materials (<https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/intercultural-dialogue-hub>). Which of the following describes your experience using the hub?
 - a) I am aware of the Hub and have contributed with materials
 - b) I am aware of the Hub and have used the materials
 - c) I am aware of the Hub but never used it
 - d) I am not aware of the Hub

Support for strengthening the capacities of members

16. What were your expectations when you decided to join the network?
 - a) More funding opportunities
 - b) More partnerships
 - c) To have international visibility
 - d) To exchange practices
 - e) For trainings and capacity building
 - f) other, please specify...
17. Have your expectations changed after joining the network?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
18. What have been your benefits as member of the ALF? Mention them shortly (open question)
19. From 2008 to 2022 in how many network meetings have you participated?
 - a) Never
 - b) 1 time
 - c) 2-3 times
 - d) Over 5 times
20. From 2008 to 2022 in how many capacity buildings TC have you participated?
 - a) Never
 - b) 1 time

- c) 2-3 times
 - d) Over 5 times
21. Since the establishment of the ALF Network in Albania there have been appointed only two HoN (Qendra AFAC (The Albanian Forum for the Alliance of Civilization) dhe Instituti Shqiptar i Medias/ Albanian Media Institute). How do you see/consider this change in terms of the continuation of the Albanian Network of ALF?
- a) It was very necessary
 - b) It was somehow necessary
 - c) Neutral
 - d) It was not necessary
 - e) It was not necessary at all
22. How would you evaluate your level of engagement in the Network?
- a) Very active
 - b) Somehow active
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not active
 - e) Not active at all
23. How would you evaluate the level of benefits as a result of your membership in the ALF?(i.e information, partnership, TCs, funding opportunities etc)
- a) Have benefited a lot
 - b) Have benefited somehow
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Haven't benefited
 - e) Haven't benefited at all
24. Will you continue being member of ALF?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
25. If you won't be member of ALF, what are the reasons of that decision? What motivates you to continue or not continue being part of ALF? (open question)

Partnerships and cooperation at national and Euro-Med level

26. Do you know the other members of the National Network?
- a) Yes, I know them
 - b) No, I don't know them
 - c) Other...
27. Has the membership in ALF helped you to establish partnerships with NGO that are part of the Albanian National Network?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
28. Has the membership in ALF helped you to establish partnerships with NGOs that are part of the 41 Networks?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
29. Have you ever been granted an ALF funded project?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
30. If yes, what kind of project/program/ initiative has been?
- a) Cultural activities
 - b) Conferences/Seminar
 - c) Raising awareness campaign
 - d) Movies/theatres/documentaries
 - e) Youth debates
 - f) Other, please specify
31. The ALF has developed a 10 year strategy “Working Together Towards 2025 https://www.annalindhoundation.org/corporate-plan?fbclid=I%3DABAR3dFG8lsm_%3DABXC_PUmRPkVcGZ9NR-zVb-2G7yhXEUMyITvolfML6A14fT70) Does it match with the priorities of your organization? If yes, in what aspects? If not, why? (open question)
32. In which of the below mentioned areas do you expect to get funding from ALF?
- a) Democracy and Human Rights
 - b) Education, trainings and research
 - c) Gender and racial based discrimination
 - d) Socio-economic and cultural cooperation
 - e) ICE
 - f) ICD
 - g) Other, please specify...
33. List some of the good practices that you have identified for the time that you have been ALF member(i.e related to ICD, communication with HoN, any successful partnership etc) (open question)

7.2 In-depth interviews

General questions:

1. In your point of view, how important do you consider the presence of ALF Network in Albania?
2. How do you consider the membership to the ALF Albania? In aspects of: expanding opportunities, more cooperation, capacity building) etc.
3. What have been your organizations’ benefits since the moment you joined the ALF Network?
4. Have you contributed to the Network so far? If yes, how?

Questions about the HoN Albania:

1. Do you think that the actual HoN is fulfilling its duties and responsibilities in coordinating the National Network? Based also in the NIR (Network Internal Rules) compiled and agreed with the members' contribution in 2020-2021?
2. How do you find the HoN approach in coordinating and managing the Network? (in terms of being proactive, engaging the members, etc)
3. What would you consider as good practices in the relation between HoN and members?
4. What suggestions would you give to improve the cooperation between the two parties?

Questions about the members:

1. According to you, what motivates members to be actively engaged in the Network?(based on your experience as well)
2. How have changed your expectations from the moment that you joined the Network to date?
3. What would you suggest to increase the level of engagement and participation of members?
4. If you were to share a good example of collaboration between members, what would that be? (share one or more if applicable)

Questions on ICD:

1. How have the membership in ALF helped you to increase your knowledge on ICD? (i.e having attended any TC, through ALF publications, any implemented project on that topic)
2. Has the increase of knowledge on ICD had any impact on the work of your organization? (i.e re-considering the field of work of your NGO, in applying for projects in this topic, organizing more activities with the focus on ICD, info sessions etc)
3. How important is the awareness and knowledge on ICD in the Albanian context?
4. For what purposes have you used the ALF Resource Center on ICD? (if applicable)
5. What materials have you used? How would you rate the materials used? (if applicable)

Questions on the Euro-Med partnership:

1. Do you think that the ALF Network can provide you with more opportunities to know other members of the National Network? Or members from the other 41 Networks?
2. ALF launches open calls for different programmes giving the members the opportunity to apply and get funding. Have you been interested in applying for any of these calls? Have you ever applied? If yes, why? If no, why?
3. Have you had any collaboration as a result of your membership in the ALF Network? If yes, how has the experience been? Would you collaborate again? If yes, why? If no, why?
4. What would you consider as good practices to encourage cooperation in the Euro-Med?

7.3 List of members interviewed:

- Ms. Admira Jorgji – Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
- Ms. Besnik Mustafaj – Former HoN- AFALC/Former Advisory Council Members
- Sara Zekaj - Rrjeti i profesionistëve të Rinj / Young Professional Network
- Miranda Mansaku – Udhëtim i Lirë / Liberi di Viaggare
- Eranda Ndregjoni - Qendra Shqiptare per Zhvillimin e Familjes
- Arjola Agolli - Partnerët Shqiptarë për Ndryshim dhe Zhvillim / Partners Albania for Change and Development
- Ermal Bega - Qendra Shqiptare për Studime Orientale / Albanian Center for Oriental Studies
- Lubjana Malaj- Qendra Progres dhe Zhvillim / Center for Progress and Development
- Nevila Jahaj- Qendra Epoka e Re
- Armela Pengilli - ACT for SOCIETY Center
- Meri Dishnica - Social and Cultural Initiative 'The Good Psychology'
- Enrik Keco – EDYN

7.4 List of members that completed the questionnaire

- Marilo Meta - Leadership Development Association Albania
- Armela Pengili - ACT for SOCIETY Center
- Drita Avdyli -Instituti Migracionit Zhvillimit dhe Integritimit
- Ermal Bega - Qendra Shqiptare për Studime Orientale (Albanian Center for Oriental Studies)
- Fabjola Ndoj - Hand To Hand Against Nation Apathy - H.A.N.A.
- Eranda Ndregjoni - Qendra Shqiptare per Zhvillimin e Familjes
- Meri Dishnica - Social and Cultural Initiative 'The Good Psychology'
- Lubjana Malaj - Qendra Progres dhe Zhvillim
- Franceska Muço - Rrjeti i Profesionistëve të Rinj
- Eglantina Lula - YMCA ne Shqiperi
- Miranda Mansaku - Udhëtim i Lirë - Liberi di Viaggiare
- Mirjam Reçi - Qendra e Zhvillimit te Shoqerise Civile, Durres
- Lumjana Cenaj - Woman center for Development and Culture Albania
- Andi Rabiçaj - Rrjeti I Organizatave Zëri I të Rinjve
- Enrik Keco - EDYN
- Musa Coha - Center for Development of Transferable Skills
- Luis Bektoshi - Qendra Rinore "Perspektiva"
- Nensi Dragoti - Qendra 'Health, Art, Sport, Tourism, Education'
- Marime Gjoka - SCiDEV
- Andi Tepelena - Art Kontakt
- Nirvana Deliu - European Movement Albania

- Arjan Lile - Shoqata Kombetare "Sfinksi" e Minoritetit Egjiptian te Shqiperise per Zhvillim dhe Integrim.
- Aida Ciro - Co-PLAN, Instituti për Zhvillimin e Habitatit
- Eldisa Zhebo - Instituti per Ndryshim e Lidership ne Shqiperi
- Alketa Lamani - Qendra Rinore e Vlores
- Lutjona Lula - ESN Albania
- Nevila Jahaj - Qendra Epoka e Re
- Ergys Gezka - LIBURNETIK
- Bledar Taho - Institute of Romani Culture in Albania
- Dorentina Hysa - Instituti Shqiptar i Medias

