

The Peacebuilder



The Newsletter of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy February 2018



The Moonlight Garden
across the Yamuna River
from the Taj Mahal



The inlaid onyx and other semi-precious stones
making up the artwork, and the Arabic script
around the gates of the Taj Mahal



The ever-present rickshaws.



A wild monkey on a roof

Global Partnership Summit

In December IMTD's President Mike Flanagan, and Executive Director Karen Dickman were invited to the Global Partnership Summit in New Delhi, India. It has primarily been focused on India/Japan opportunities, but is interested in expanding to Africa and the United States. We were part of a delegation of six US representatives, including Dr. Eric Wolterstorff of our partner organization, Sovereignty First. We were all invited to speak at various workshops, resulting in a number of potentially helpful connections for work in our programs.



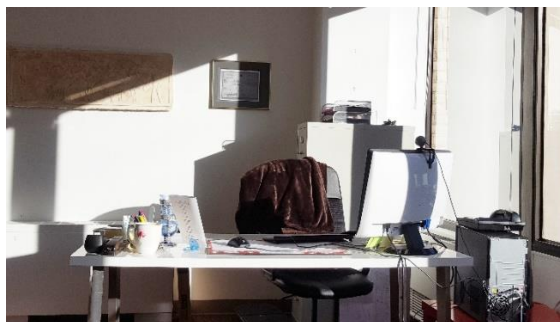
Mike speaking to a panel of Indian media personalities and communications experts. Eric is waiting for his turn on the far left.

Shared Information Framework

IMTD attended a three day retreat run by Sovereignty First in January. The topic was primarily a clarification of the partnership relationships. Three Sovereignty First Partners were in attendance, IMTD, Cooperative Capacity Partners, and Dumas and Associates. Sovereignty First is prepared to offer an array of products ranging from the full on-going national conversations with convergence to small, quick desk reviews.

IMTD has formalized our partnership with Sovereignty First with a mutually very beneficial negotiated agreement. It allows us to use the shared information platform independently, paying an intellectual property fee, and to adapt it for special purposes. This allows both organizations to test the market and usefulness of different versions. Thanks to Madeline O'Harra for facilitating the negotiation.

Madeline's desk on a late afternoon



Georgia

IMTD's partnership with Zeiter Ideas Development Fund is growing like wildfire. So far eight offices have opened in various regions of Georgia to qualify applicants, and to oversee the use of small grants. They provide on-the ground accountability for money allocated to the economic redevelopment of the country. Groups from Ukraine and other neighboring countries are asking for the same program once Georgia is running smoothly. IMTD and our President Mike Flanagan are helping the Georgians set up a Business and Investment Center, starting with the Small Cellars Initiative. It will promote Georgian wines from vintners who are new to the international market. Although we are still in the set-up phase we expect finances to start moving soon.



The banner used by one of the regional offices in Georgia

Toolz for Tough Conversations

Mary Dumas will be teaching our Toolz program at the International Association for Public Participation Skills Building Symposium in Austin, TX on February 28. Check it out if you might be in the area, or schedule a class in your area.

<https://iap2usa.org/event-2643029>



Collective Memory Program

The National Group for Transitional Justice in Syria is a group of lawyers and supporters in Idlib who are trying to promote a justice based approach to transitional justice for that country. They want to hold people accountable for crimes committed against the population of the country since 2011. They also have a hope to restore people across the divides as neighbors rather than enemies. Syria has fallen off the headlines which makes raising money for anything there now very difficult. If anyone would like to contribute to them specifically we will forward it to them. If anyone would like to set up a crowd source fundraiser for them please contact Karen Dickman at kdickman@imtd.org.



Radwan Ayashi is a Syrian lawyer and a leader of the National Group for Transitional Justice in Syria. He is in the blue shirt on the far right.

Louise Diamond Committee to Protect Next Generations

Program Manager and Vermont resident John McCormick has added a new interest onto his green banks initiative. He has recently begun to promote the idea of reducing the carbon footprint of the school bus fleet in Vermont. He is advocating this as an appropriate use of their \$18.7 million share of the Volkswagen settlement.



Wish List

In case you were wondering how you could do something nice for us, beyond a general cash contribution.

We sure could use:

https://www.amazon.com/RCA-U1000-Dect-6-0-10-Handset-Telephone/dp/B0732HGFB8/ref=sr_1_33_sspa?ie=UTF8&qid=1517442606&sr=8-33-spons&keywords=cordless%2Bbusiness%2Bphones&th=1

This has a 4 line capacity, matching our current system, with features we would like to use, but have broken in our current phones. For instance, you may be leaving voice mail messages, but we can't retrieve them. We seriously are not trying to ignore you. We would need the main base station and 4 accessory desk stations. They can be purchased 1 at a time.

https://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Mobile-Whiteboard-Wheels-Presentation/dp/B06XCNYQB7/ref=sr_1_32?ie=UTF8&qid=1517442855&sr=8-32&keywords=rolling+dry+erase+board&refinements=p_72%3A2661619011

This is a 2'x3' white board on wheels.

Country Profile Finland

Looking at global dimensions in social policy and social work practice in Finland

by

Stacy Keskinarkaus

January 31, 2018

Introduction

Finland is a model country in many global respects. It shines as an example of social welfare policies, successful business growth, and a law-ordered and citizen cooperating society. These exemplary qualities of nation-success make it an attractive country to those looking for resettlement. However, its success and attraction as a nation can also mean an attraction to social problems related to those clamoring to get away from troubled nations to receive from its benefits.

Background context of country

A Brief History

The Republic of Finland is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. It shares borders with Russia, Norway, and Sweden, the Gulf of Bothnia to its west, and the Gulf of Finland is to its south.

Until 1809, Finland was part of Sweden and under Swedish rule (Meinander, 2014). It frequently found itself the site of military battles between Sweden and Russia, and in the late eighteenth century a politically active Finnish nobility decided that, since it was frequently used as a battlefield for these two nations it should seek independence and become an autonomous nation (Meinander, 2014). Though it would not gain actual independence until the early twentieth century, Finland eventually became an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire until it fought the Russian Revolution in October 1917 (Meinander, 2014). The Russian Revolution produced a civil war that yielded the Finnish Declaration of Independence adopted in December 1917 (Meinander, 2014). (In fact, just last year, on December 6, 2017, Finland celebrated its centenary independence.) After a brief attempt to establish a monarchy, Finland became a presidential republic (Meinander, 2014).

During World War II, Finland became involved in three major conflicts, and at end of WWII, in 1955, it joined the United Nations and established an official policy of neutrality (Meinander, 2014). Despite its policy of neutrality, it remained active globally, joining the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1969, the European Union in 1995, and in 1999 the Eurozone, an economic and monetary union of European member states adopting the euro as its currency (Meinander, 2014).

Major Ethnic, Racial, And Religious Groups

Finland is located in the Fennoscandian region of Northern Europe, an area of historical and cultural exchange and inter-relations between Sami, Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Russian people (Meinander, 2014). The country's native language is Finnish, spoken by 90% of the population (Meinander, 2014). Its official languages are Finnish and Swedish; Swedish is spoken in some coastal areas in the west and south and in the autonomous region of Åland (Meinander, 2014). Swedish is also the native language of about 5.5% of

Finland's population (Meinander, 2014). Other languages spoken in Finland include Sami, the official language of the indigenous people of northern Lapland; Finnish Romani and Finnish Sign Language, both constitutionally recognized; and Karelian (Meinander, 2014). The most commonly spoken foreign languages in Finland are English, German, and French, and they are taught to children in schools (Meinander, 2014).

The rights of minority groups, in particular Sami, Swedish-speaking Finns and Romani people, are constitutionally protected, as well as the rights of immigrants and those seeking asylum or citizenship (Meinander, 2014). Immigrant languages include Russian, Estonian, Somali, English and Arabic (Meinander, 2014).



The majority of Finns, about 75%, are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Meinander, 2014). The second largest group has no religious affiliation and comprises about 22% of the population (Meinander, 2014). The remainder of the population belongs to the Finnish Orthodox Church, other Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholic Church, Islam, Judaism, and other non-Christian communities of faith (Meinander, 2014). The main Lutheran and Orthodox churches are national churches of Finland and so hold special influence and roles in state ceremonies and schools (Meinander, 2014).

A Demographic Profile

The population of Finland is currently about 5,500,000 (Meinander, 2014). It has the third-lowest population density of any European country and is the eighth largest country in Europe (Meinander, 2014). It is also the most sparsely populated country in the European Union (Meinander, 2014). Its population growth rate is 0.5% and has held steady at this rate since 2008, up from 0.4% from 2004-2007 (Central microdata catalog, 2014). Finland's population, however, is aging. Its median age is 42.7 years, and half of its voters are estimated to be over 50 years old. The population's birth rate is at 10.42 births per 1,000, and had a fertility rate of 1.8 in 2014 (Central microdata catalog, 2014). Recent reports, however, report Finland's birth rate dropping to 1.71 births per woman in 2015, with the rate continuing to fall through 2017 (Finnish birth rate on course to be among lowest since 1868 famine, 2018). Finland's urban population calculated by the World Bank and the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects found that in 2013, 84% of Finland's population lived in urban areas (Central microdata catalog, 2014). This number began increasing after its movement toward urbanization in the 20th-century (Meinander, 2014). Its urban areas are predominantly in its southern parts of the country with its largest cities being Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa (Meinander, 2014). Smaller cities with populations over 100,000 include Tampere, Turku, Oulu, Jyväskylä and Lahti (Meinander, 2014).

Finland maintains a healthy nation status with its infant mortality rate, the number of infants dying before age one, at 2/1,000 in 2012 (Central microdata catalog, 2014). Its maternal mortality rate, the number of women dying during pregnancy and childbirth per 100,000 live births, was at 4/100,000 in 2013 (Central microdata catalog, 2014). The maternal mortality rate includes factors of fertility, birth attendants, and HIV prevalence.

According to *AVERTing HIV and AIDS* (n.d.), in 2011, Finland reported 2,900 people living with HIV/AIDS with a 0.1% adult prevalence.

A Poverty Profile

Inequality Watch (2012) reported a low poverty rate for the nation in 2010 of 5.5%. *Inequality Watch* (2012) also reported women at a 1.4% higher poverty rate than men. That is a total of 13.8% of women, compared to 12.4% in men.

A person whose household income per consumption unit is less than 60 per cent of the median income is considered living “at risk of poverty” (Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011, 2013). This income threshold was approximately 13,640 euros per year, or 1,140 euros per month, in a one person household in 2011 (Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011, 2013). Finland's income distribution statistics indicate that a total of 704,000 persons were at risk of poverty in 2011, 13.2% of the population (Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011, 2013). The number of children aged under 18 living in low income households was 120,000, which is 11 per cent of all children in Finland (Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011, 2013). The “at-risk-of-poverty” rates have remained unchanged for the last ten years (Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011, 2013).

Finland’s urban and rural water sources rank 100% in improvement (Central microdata catalog, 2014). This factor measures the percentage of population with access to improved drinking water, including piped water connections in the household, on private dwellings, such as plots and yards, public taps or standpipes, tube wells or boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, and rainwater collection (Central microdata catalog, 2014);

Finland’s adult literacy rate is 100%. It measures the percentage of the population age 15 and older who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life, as well as make simple arithmetic calculations, according to the Central Intelligence Agency (*Europe: Finland* [Fact sheet], 2014).

Finland also rates high in the domains of social and human progress. Its life expectancy was 81 years in 2012 (Central microdata catalog, 2014). It ranks 21 out of 187 countries measured and compared in the International Human Development Index, which measures life expectancy, literacy, education, standards of living, and quality of life (International human development indicators: Finland, 2013). The index confirms

Finland as a “developed” country, falling in the “very high human development” category with its economic policies supporting an improved quality of life for its citizens, enhancing their wellbeing and child welfare (International human development indicators: Finland, 2013).



References

Meinander, H. (2014). *History of Finland*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Central microdata catalog. (2014). Retrieved July 2, 2014, from (Central microdata catalog, 2014).

European HIV and AIDS statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved July 10, 2014, from AVERting HIV and AIDS website:

<http://www.avert.org/european-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>.

Finnish birth rate on course to be among lowest since 1868 famine. (n.d.). Retrieved January 31, 2018, from

https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_birth_rate_on_course_to_be_among_lowest_since_1868_famine/9710030

Number of people at risk of poverty 704,000 in 2011. (2013, March 20). Retrieved July 12, 2014, from

Statistics Finland website: https://tilastokeskus.fi/til/tjt/2011/02/tjt_2011_02_2013-03-20_tie_002_en.html.

Poverty in Europe: the current situation. (2012, January 26). Retrieved July 12, 2014, from

<http://www.inequalitywatch.eu/spip.php?article99>.

Europe: Finland [Fact sheet]. (2014, June 22). Retrieved July 2, 2014, from

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html>.

International human development indicators: Finland. (2013, March 14). Retrieved June 15, 2014, from United

Nations Development Programme: human development reports website:

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>.

About the author:

Stacy Keskinarkaus, M.S.W., is Team Lead of Mediation at IMTD. She currently works to establish her mediation practice in the Pirkanmaa region of Finland, and she also provides staff development through cross cultural training. Her interests are facilitating integration of minority groups into work places and communities through conflict prevention planning, communication coaching and mediation. She serves as *Tampere Ambassador* for the *Tampere Region Economic Development Agency (Tredea)*, bridging international talents interested in working in the Tampere region and companies looking for international talents in Finland. Stacy completed her MSW at the University of Southern California with a concentration in social work and business in a global society.