

Interpedia 2020





- International adoption
- Development cooperation
- Global education

Contents

Editorial	3	Development cooperation in 2020	14
International adoptions in 2020	4	Well-being for children with the support of donors	15
Intercountry adoptions follow time	5	Higher standards in development cooperation	16–17
Adoption work during the pandemic	6–7	Development results from 2020	18–19
A long career in Interpedia has taught a lot	8–9	Interpedia's development co-operation partners in 2020	20
Meaningful cooperation for the benefit of the child	10–11	Communications Finance	21
Post-adoption service at Interpedia	12	Organisation and administration	22–23
#Adoptionilo (#AdoptionJoy) campaign	13	Support our work	24

INTERPEDIA'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Office:

Asemamiehenkatu 4 B, 00520 Helsinki
+358 9 2727 060
toimisto@interpedia.fi

Communications:

+358 50 4141 452
tiedotus@interpedia.fi

Development cooperation and sponsorship programmes:

+358 9 2727 060
kummi@interpedia.fi

www.interpedia.fi

EDITORS:

Editor-in-chief: Anja Ojuva

Subeditor: Marja Utela

Address: Interpedia, Asemamiehenkatu 4 B,
00520 Helsinki, FINLAND

Translation: Ilona Kalliola, Inkeri Kantola, Anna Savolainen,
Marja Utela

Layout: Petri Koivisto Design, Lahti

Photos: Interpedia's photo archives, Envato Elements, Saga Kiiskinen, Abba, La Casa de la Madre y el Niño, DCY Child Adoption Center, Petri Koivisto, Sanni Poutala, Tuukka Ervasti, Nora Moisio, Annastiina Airaksinen, Vesa Laitinen, Loo Niva, SA Cares for Life, Project L.I.FE.

Publisher: Interpedia ry, ISSN 2341-5886

Printed in: Suomen Uusiokuori Oy 2021



With support from
Finland's development
cooperation



Year of adaptation

The peculiar year 2020 has now passed and we are still living with the changes it has brought amongst us. The year leaves behind many traces but luckily we can also expect many things to return to normal. The most important thing being the need to meet face-to-face with each other.

For us, the year of the pandemic has meant giving up on business trips, among other things. We have worked without the encounters and discussions, and all the interaction which no remote meetings can replace. During this year, we have, however, often been grateful for the fact that we already have long-term cooperation relationships. We know and trust each other, and this has secured the closeness of our cooperation also during this time of remote connections. Trust has carried us through these exceptional times.

There has recently been open discussion in Finland and other European countries about international adoptions. The experiences and practices of several decades have been under scrutiny. From all this knowledge and research results we can build the future processes on an even stronger basis.

The number of adoptions through Interpedia was the lowest in many decades but Interpedia's share of all children adopted to Finland was nevertheless significant. During this exceptional year, the children and families have had to wait for their processes to move forward and for the possibility to travel to pick up the child. In addition, the future parents have had to endure various special arrangements, when finally being able to start their trip.

In this situation, we have been grateful for the flexibility and adaptation skills of our adoption applicants,

cooperation partners and staff. Nobody was prepared for such a year but by mutual cooperation we have been able to get through the year quite well.

As regards development cooperation, this year has also been exceptional. The effects of the pandemic have been particularly clear amongst children. All the support that we have been able to provide together with our donors, has been extremely necessary in the cooperation countries.

Our development cooperation supports especially the possibility of vulnerable children's right to education and rehabilitation. During year 2020, this has been exceptionally challenging for these groups for which access to education is difficult even under normal circumstances.

During this year, we have partially shifted our work to a more concrete form of family support, together with our cooperation partners. Many families have struggled with daily survival. In addition, our partners have aimed to ensure that learning has been possible also during lockdown. The support of our long-term sponsors has been extremely valuable once again.

A big thank you for the past year to all members of Interpedia, our customers, monthly donors, sponsors, adoption and development partners, funders, cooperation partners as well as the board and staff of Interpedia for the trust and cooperation. Special thanks to all the children that are affected by our operations. Children are our future, a valuable gift that must be nurtured.

Anja Ojuva
Executive Director



International adoptions in 2020

The coronavirus pandemic affected adoption work during 2020 worldwide. During the year, 19 adoptive children arrived in Finland through Interpedia (2019: 52). Interpedia's share of the children arriving through all service providers was 70% (2019: 78%).

The children adopted to Finland in 2020 were 0–8 years

old when they arrived. The largest age groups were under one year (5) and one year (5).

At the end of the year, the number of customer relationships was 138 (2019: 106) and the number of applications in Interpedia's contact countries was 67 (2019: 60).

ADOPTIVE CHILDREN ARRIVING IN FINLAND THROUGH INTERPEDIA IN 2010–2020

	Bulgaria	South Africa	Ethiopia	India	Kenya	China	Colombia	Taiwan (China)	Thailand	Total
2020	–	5	–	1	–	–	8	2	3	19
2019	–	23	–	3	–	1	9	2	14	52
2018	–	10	–	6	–	2	6	1	3	28
2017	–	20	–	5	–	4	8	2	1	40
2016	–	13	–	5	–	4	9	–	9	40
2015	–	29	1	5	3	11	5	–	4	58
2014	–	20	3	7	2	15	16	–	8	71
2013	–	20	3	8	4	19	2	–	8	64
2012	–	12	3	8	6	16	7	–	4	56
2011	–	19	11	7	8	14	7	–	1	67
2010	–	14	10	3	9	11	10	–	10	67

Intercountry adoptions follow time

I see adoption as a lifelong process that has three parts – the so called adoption triangle. When speaking about adoptions, we often focus on the arrival of the child to the family and the childhood of the adopted child, but adoption follows the family for the entire life.

As with life in general, adoption comes with a wide range of emotions, great joy and great grief at the same time. There are many sides to the same thing, and all this also follows time. Now I can see all this more clearly.

TEAMWORK FOR THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD

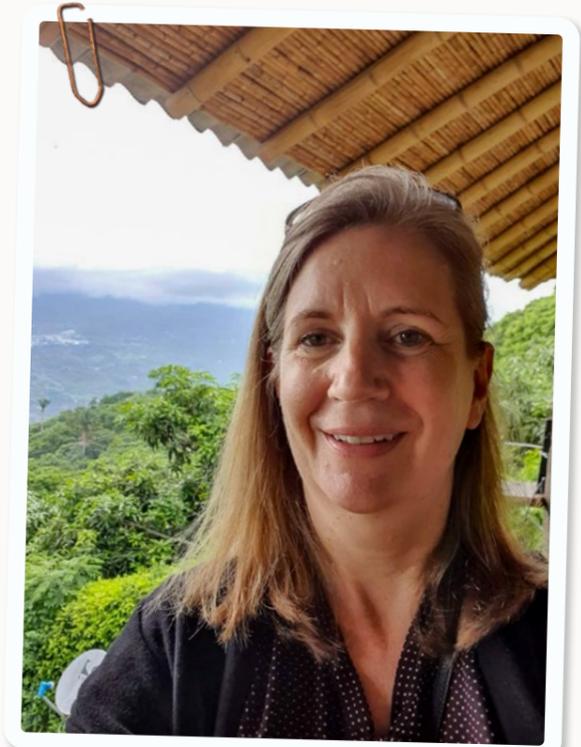
What is best about this job are the people and the moments when things come together and suddenly the complicated world looks clear. Moments like these appear for example when a child proposal is finalized and you feel that the right people or right things match. I also enjoy team work, doing things together, which is essential in this job.

Interpedia's clear strength is that we really think about the child and we aim to do our best to ensure the best interest of the child. We reflect on this a lot. We have a small and flexible working community that follows time. Our skills and long-term work as advocates for the best interest of the child is well appreciated also in our countries of cooperation.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION IS GOING THROUGH A TRANSITION PHASE

Today there is a lot of discussion around intercountry adoptions in several countries. Adoption is not an island but is affected by phenomena and discourse of the society. A transition phase such as this is a good time to think about where our work is headed.

The experiences and perceptions of adopted children are changing our work more and more at the moment. We wish for the well-being of all adopted children, and we work towards that goal from our part. It is indeed encouraging to see that we have taken huge steps forward in the past decades. Yet there is always more to develop and learn. For example, we still know little about how the



background of adopted children affects them when they grow old. Our learning process continues.

THE EUROPEAN COOPERATION STRENGTHENS US

I represent Finland in the European network of adoption organisations EurAdopt. This cooperation is highly important today. Together we can have more influence. At the same time we learn many things, hear about different issues and gain wider perspective to our own work.

Different countries face many of the same challenges even if their laws differed. The transformation of the adoption field is also visible at the European level and it is important to be involved in these discussions.

FUTURE NEEDS ARE CHANGING OUR WORK

In the future we need to listen to the adopted children themselves more and more. The importance of post adoption service will therefore continue to grow. In addition, adoption research continues to produce more knowledge to us to support adoption work.

We will also carry on with the very close cooperation we have with our partners. The future lies in individual, tailored and well managed adoptions; this type of work still has its place in the world.

Our ways of working have changed during the year of the coronavirus. We will surely continue to use more remote connections for our information seminars and meetings as well as for our discussions with cooperating partners.

This year has brought about an enormous wave of changes both for us and for our partners, but we have been able to adapt to it, and our work is continuing.

Salla Hari

The author is the Director for Adoption Program at Interpedia. She has worked with Interpedia since 2006 and in her current assignment since 2012. She holds a master's degree in Social Sciences.

Adoption work during the pandemic

The year 2020 was exceptional in many ways due to Covid-19. The pandemic-related limitations slowed down adoption work both in Finland and in our contact countries. In addition, the pick-up trips were mostly on hiatus for about half a year. However, most of our contact countries opened up for travel by the end of the year 2020.

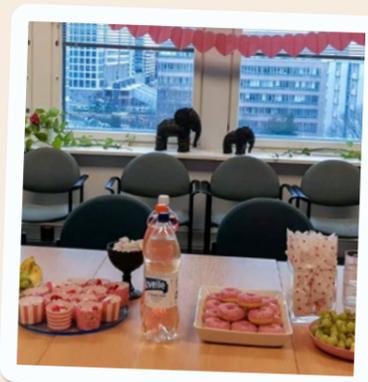
The exceptional year also brought a lot of changes to office work. In the spring of 2020 we quickly switched to remote connections in our work, meetings and information seminars. Many of these new practices will remain in our everyday work alongside our old ones. This will allow us to better serve adoption applicants across the country.

"Our partners around the world have done their best to ensure that the children get the care they need and stay

healthy. This has been and still is a very demanding task for the staff of the children's homes in this situation", says Anja Ojuva, Interpedias Executive Director

Our adoption service staff met with the adoption applicants regularly during the waiting period. In addition, our adoption work includes close cooperation with the consulting doctors and the social workers in adoption counselling. Due to the rapid changes caused by the pandemic, we communicated to adoption applicants more frequently than usual.

Regular support and feedback calls were continued by phone and over Teams meetings with adoptive families after the adoptive child's arrival in Finland. The feedback has been very positive. The method also provides valuable information for developing our adoption work.



Valentine Day's workshops for adoption applicants are about to begin at the office. In addition to sweets and other delicacies, tips to applications and meeting the child were available, as well as a chance to network with other applicant families.

Interpedia on Instagram 13.2.2020



In the "Picking up a little sibling" event on Monday, the children were packing suitcases for the adoption trip. What would you pack for a pick-up trip?

Interpedia on Instagram 4.3.2020



A joyful day for the adoption workers: a tiny guest at the office. The mood of the family recently returned from the pick-up trip: "The first Christmas together"

Interpedia on Instagram 26.11.2020

Cooperation in Finland

The Finnish Adoption Board operates under the control of the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira), and Interpedia is a member of the Board's plenary session. Interpedia was represented in the session by Ms Salla Hari, Director for Adoption Program, with Executive Director Anja Ojuva as deputy member. Ms Ojuva was also a member of the Consultative Committee for Preventive Child Welfare of the Central Union for Child Welfare in Finland (LSKL). Social Worker Sanna Alanko represented Interpedia in the Steering Group for Adoption Curator Activities of the organisation All Our Children.

The three adoption service providers operating in Finland (Interpedia, Save the Children, and the City of Helsinki) continued to engage in close collaboration.

International cooperation

Interpedia has been an active member in the activities of the Nordic Adoption Council (NAC) and EurAdopt from the very beginning. Interpedia's Senior Adoption Coordinator, Ms Marika Elmeranta, represented Finland in NAC, and Interpedia's Director for Adoption Program, Ms Salla Hari, was elected as the representative of Finland in the EurAdopt council.

In 2020 both NAC and EurAdopt meetings were held mostly via remote connections and the conferences were postponed to the years to come. Nordic and European cooperation has become a necessity for exchanging information and experiences, and even on the practical level.

We continued our close cooperation with the embassies of our contact countries in Finland. The business trips were cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, the collaboration with our partners through remote connections was more frequent.



We received news from Abba and the situation in South Africa during the Covid-19 lock-down:

We stay hopeful that as a country we took measures quick enough to flatten the curve and play for time to help our medical sector to deal with the pressure. It is very difficult to regulate lockdown in a country which is so diverse and we learn as we go!

We have been in close contact with all the places of temporary care. We are happy to share that they have taken all necessary precautionary measures to ensure the children's safety and wellbeing during this period.

Abba's Executive Director Katinka Pieterse on Interpedia's Facebook 2.4.2020 (Abba's Operations Director Rene Ferreira in the photo)



The Adoption Coordinator of La Casa de la Madre y el Niño, Ms Lorena Vargas, sent us news from Colombia during the pandemic:

"Hi friends in Finland and families of La Casa! La Casa is going through a very hard time right now, adjusting to the crisis. The kids are doing fine, but our staff is having problems to get transportation to their homes and coming back. Everyone here as a team is working together for our children and putting our health at risk. First and most important thing for us is our children."

Interpedia on Facebook 7.4.2020



Our Adoption Contact Person, Ms Acharawan Boonyarattapan, sent us news from Thailand

"...the pick-up trips will be postponed until the pandemic is under control. DCY Child Adoption Center will, however, continue receiving new applications as before."

Interpedia on Facebook 3.4.2020



Our Adoption Contact Person Gireeja Seth Rajesh sent us a covid-time report from India:

"The lockdown has restricted people from stepping out of their homes, unless they are going to get essential groceries. Life in India at the moment has come to a standstill.

"...there is a very strict rule of not allowing anyone in the (children's) homes and also instilling better hygiene like hand washing, etc among children and staff."

Interpedia on Facebook 27.4.2020





A long career in Interpedia has taught a lot

My work with international adoptions started in mid 1990s when I was living in China. Save the Children, Finland, was starting cooperation with China and I started working as their adoption contact person. My tasks included working with the state cooperation partner China Center for Adoption Affairs, and I also accompanied the adoptive families in their pick-up trips to the provinces.

During those trips I saw how the provincial level work with different authorities goes. In addition, I got to be with the adoptive parents right from the beginning when they started caring for a child who was completely unknown to them.

So the very concrete side of adoption was familiar to me when I started working for Interpedia. I started in 2000, when China was already a very significant country of origin, and a lot of adopted children arrived from there. It was easy for me to emphasize with what was expecting the families during the pick-up trip. The early years were very hectic because a whole group of applicant families received child proposals almost once a month. We arranged the trips together with CWTS:n (China Women Travel Service). CWTS also arranged excursions to sights and the places where their children were found and cultural activities to the whole group.

I particularly remember one group's trip. One member of the group, and adoptive father, had sung a tango called Satumaa (Fairytale land) to all the families picking up their child. Those were exciting times and trips. Although sometimes one of the children or parents fell ill, for the most part everything went well.

Interpedias office was in Vaasa at the time, and we adoption coordinators participated in the adoption preparation courses in different parts of Finland. We rarely met with the applicant families at the office, more so at courses and other events, such as Interpedia's spring or au-

turn meetings. Occasionally we arranged other events, like a theme day for Thailand applicants. In the event we got to know the country's culture, dance and music. There were also a lot of participants in the country-specific family gatherings. In those events we saw families, heard about their lives and learned new things.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING MOTIVATES

Regular business trips to the contact countries have taught me a lot. I have had the opportunity to participate in starting new contacts like in Kenya and in Taiwan. The trips always remind me that international social work cannot be done in other ways than in dialogue with, for example, the children's homes, the cooperation partners and authorities.

You can never fully master this field of work. Your interest and motivation is maintained when you are constantly learning about this work, yourself, other people and the world. The operating environment as well as the societies and values in both Finland and in our contact countries are constantly changing. Over a long period of time, you will find that many values and perceptions of things have had time to be renewed. In India, for example, since the beginning of my career the special needs of adopted children and their rehabilitation into families have been discussed. Indian domestic adoption applicants (and they are many) have also begun to adopt a lot of girls and children with special needs.

OUR CONTACT PERSONS ARE A BRIDGE TO OUR COOPERATION COUNTRIES

We have been able to recruit excellent contact persons in our cooperation countries. Their role as a bridge in our cooperation with state contacts is essential. They are also the key to getting the adoption applicants as close as possible to the child and his/her needs already



before and during the pick-up trip. This requires the contact person's understanding and knowledge about the children's homes, the childcare culture and the child's needs. They also act as interpreters in the remote meetings between the child, the applicants, the representative of the children's home and me before the applicants travel to pick up their child.

In addition to language skills, they provide support in special moments, for example during Covid-19, when the family takes the child in their care in a foreign place without familiar people around. Their work includes also intercultural interpretation.

For the family formation to succeed as well as possible in different circumstances, trust is needed. It is created by all the information we have been able to provide during info sessions and meetings during the adoption process, and by the fact that families can feel that they are in safe hands during the pick-up trip.

An important experience of success for all of us is when the family sends us the first photo showing the timid trust between the adoptive parents and the child, and the message says that despite the challenges, we are happy and believe we will cope.

LONG JOURNEY TOGETHER

Each adoption process is a shared journey with families. And it is the same with the cooperation partners. We all have a need to develop as a person and in our work. My goal has been to develop together with the contact countries. We are an old partner for both India and Thailand, so we are also asked for development ideas. During a long career you, of course, hope to have something to give.

Within Interpedia we have had a team spirit striving for improvement, and as an organisation we have been a reliable partner. Our expertise is valued. We have invited our partners to Finland, and they have been able to

see how the children are doing. It is important to know Finnish society, social security and school system, ie the whole living environment that the children arrive in. On business trips we tell our partners about these and how the children are doing in Finland.

The values and the premises of this work are such that I have always been able to share them. When your work is demanding but meaningful, shared values are important, especially if you work in this field for so long. As an organisation we are reaching middle age and we are still a solid actor in the field.

Many of the children and young people adopted via Interpedia still want to come and see us. We are still there for them, and we warmly welcome them. The encounters have been great. I may have met a young adoptee whose adoption I had taken care of two decades ago.

You get strength from your work community, and colleagues with whom you can openly share the joys and sorrows of this work and life. The doors to their rooms are always open and the interaction is genuine. It has always been nice to go to work and I am still motivated. The aims and objectives of the work support this.

I have got so much from Interpedia, adoption applicants, families and young adoptees. I have also had the opportunity to study alongside my work and graduate as a social worker. The desire to study social work stems from my work as a senior adoption coordinator. I want to develop as a person and professionally. In my studies, I specialised in immigration issues, and now I am taking on a new challenge, utilizing my experience in Interpedia and my studies in working with a new kind of client group.

Eija Kiiskinen

The author is a Senior Adoption Coordinator. She has worked in Interpedia since 2000 until the summer of 2021. She holds an MA in cultural anthropology and an M.Soc.Sc. (social work).



Meaningful cooperation for the benefit of the child

When I started in Interpedia as an education coordinator in 2004, we were going through a very hectic time. The big upheaval of 2005, moving the office from Vaasa to Helsinki, caused a variety of arrangements from practical moving to recruiting new members of staff, and at the same time we were organising an international seminar to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the reform of the Finnish Adoption Act.

I originally applied to Interpedia because I knew the organisation was working with South Africa. The country is important to me personally. In 2005, I participated in starting sponsorship programme with SA Cares for Life, after which I moved on to the position of adoption coordinator and made my first business trip to the country. My relationship with South Africa has only deepened over the years, and I want to maintain it by following the country's society and culture. Working with South Africa continues to motivate me, and for my part, I want to be involved in changing at least one child's life for the better.

Some years later I was given the responsibility for cooperation with Colombia, and I have had a chance to familiarise myself with that as well. The country has gradually become as dear to me as South Africa. These relations are very important to me, I have gotten to know people and the countries and their adoption systems, and I have also been able to have an impact on them.

DEEPER COOPERATION

Our partnerships have changed a lot over the years. We have moved to a much more dialogical way of working, to deeper cooperation. Now, even on a daily basis, we reflect on ways to improve family support, children's affairs and post adoption services.

I have had the opportunity to be involved in building the post adoption services, and its importance has grown. We are constantly learning new things, and through adop-

tees' experiences we can also develop adoption work. Nowadays, the work is much more individual and tailored, the preparation of the families is more in-depth and we have more encounters. Now we investigate the child's health condition as carefully as we can, and at the same time we need to know the capabilities of the applicant family before the placement.

ONLY CHANGE IS PERMANENT

There has been no quiet moment during these years. Anything can happen and you have to be prepared to react to it. Legislation or political situation in the contact country may change, suddenly there may be an ash cloud blocking travel or a global pandemic stopping everything.

Technology has also advanced enormously. Before we communicated everything by fax or paper mail, even the use of email was rare. Today we have many different channels and video connections, the world has shrunk and we are part of a global family. At the same time, the work has become much faster.

ADOPTION SYSTEMS ARE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING

Ethical work is important to me. It has been a great honor to be involved in developing adoption systems in collaboration with partners. Much progress has been made both in our contact countries and in Finland. In addition, conditions in the children's homes have improved considerably. The childcare culture in the contact countries has changed, the education of childminders has progressed, and we know much more about the impact of children's homes' conditions on children, which is important for the attachment relationship.

The development of systems is a good thing as such. The downside of it is that the adoption processes have become longer in all countries. As a result, the children stay longer in the children's homes. Bureaucracy is



essential in a legal process, but there is still a need to constantly consider how to streamline it in the best interest of the child.

Over the years, child protection in our contact countries has also moved forward, which means, for example, an increase in domestic adoptions. Yet there are still children that cannot be placed in their birth countries. In those cases, international adoption is a good option to ensure permanent family for a child.

TEAMWORK WITH A PURPOSE

The best part of my job has been the great Interpedia-team and my colleagues around the world and the feeling of doing meaningful work. My primary motive in this work is to see the child getting a family, the moment the stars light up in his/her eyes, often already on the pick-up trip. The goal is to find the right family for the child. It has been a joy and an honour to work with so many wonderful families who have provided a wonderful growth environment for these adoptees.

The child is our primary client. It is extremely important, and if that is compromised, I am in the wrong place. I am prepared to spend a lot of time for sake of the child, to make the effort so that I would not be the one to delay the child's process.

Each child proposal requires a lot of work these days, medical consultations take time, and we reflect on the placements carefully in our cooperation networks and our team. There are many children overlooked by the system, but if you look more closely into the case, new possibilities may be found – this is very motivating.

NORDIC COOPERATION IS CLOSER THAN EVER

Cooperation in our own team and with my colleagues in the contact countries has been very important. In addition, Nordic cooperation has been exciting and useful.

This network has become much tighter over the years. In many cases, my closest colleague can now be found in another Nordic country. This is useful for professional development and also very inspiring. I represent Interpedia on the Board of the Nordic Adoption Council NAC and, in addition, I am often in contact with my colleagues in other Nordic countries.

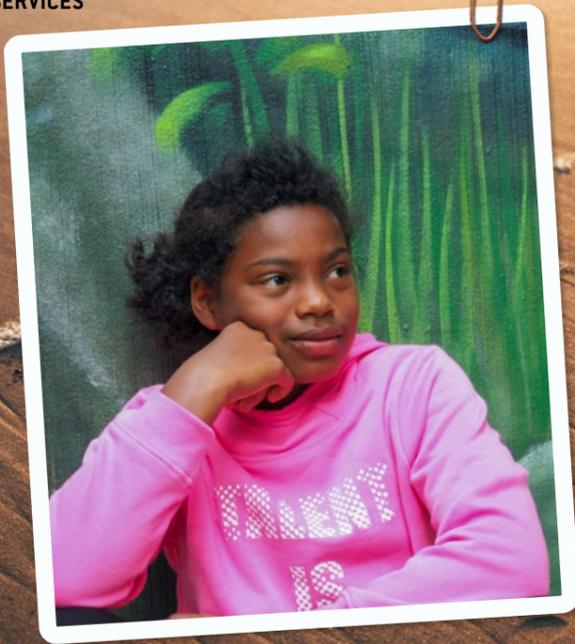
Interpedia has always been a very active player in Nordic cooperation. We think very similarly about the adoption field and share the same values. Our common views on this work are recorded in the Nordic Adoption Approach.

FUTURE VISIONS

I am currently looking forward to the time after Covid-19 and I hope that our contact countries survive these difficult times. Unfortunately, pandemic has not reduced the need for child protection and, with it, perhaps the need for international adoptions. The post-pandemic era will surely include new practises and reforms can hardly be avoided, because nothing in adoption work is as certain as change.

Marika Elmeranta

The author is a Senior Adoption Coordinator. She has worked in Interpedia since 2004 and she holds a degree in Educational Sciences.



Post-adoption service at Interpedia

Post-adoption service can be helpful in situations where the different parties of the adoption triad reflect on their background and the reasons behind adoption. The post-adoption meetings at the office can include going through the adoption documents, discussion with the post-adoption worker, seeking more information on the adoptee's background or support in organising a root-seeking trip.

Together with other Finnish adoption service providers, Interpedia received funding from the appropriation granted by the government to Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) for this purpose. Thanks to this support, we can expand the range and improve the quality of our post-adoption service activities.

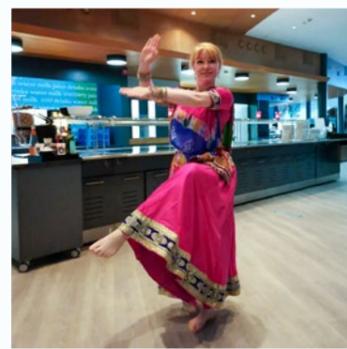
In 2020, we participated in the gathering of families with adoptive children from India. The families and adoptees had the opportunity to meet Interpedia's staff. In addition, we held two info sessions about post-adoption services.

In March 2020, Interpedia's post-adoption work started working via remote connections. Due to the coronavirus, no root-seeking trips were arranged since March 2020.



Two fantastic working days in Oulu are over. Interpedia's post-adoption service organised an info session and met adoptees and their parents in person. These encounters highlighted the essential role that the adoptive parents play when an adoptee wants to reflect on issues related to his/her background. It is important that the child or young person is allowed to remember and miss his/her country of birth. Thank you for the wonderful and authentic encounters!

Interpedia on Instagram 6.3.2020



Over the weekend, the families who adopted or are expecting a child from India met each other at the "Intiainen" event. Our adoption team also participated in the event.

Our contact person in India, Ms Gireja Rejesh spoke, via remote connection, about her work as Interpedia's representative, the impact of the pandemic on Indian adoptions and how the children are kept safe in the children's homes. Our Senior Adoption Coordinator, Ms Eija Kiiskinen, spoke about the history and present of Interpedia's adoption cooperation with India, as well as our post-adoption services and identity building.

Next year, the adoptive youth will be responsible for organising the whole event. Well done!

Interpedia on facebook 24.8.2020

#Adoptionilo (#AdoptionJoy) campaign



Already for the fourth time we organised together with other actors in the field of adoption the #Adoptionilo/#Adoptionsglädje (Adoption Joy) campaign in connection with the Adoptees' Day in March. The purpose of the campaign was to demonstrate that adoptive families and adoptees mostly lead a perfectly normal daily life. During the week, adoption organisations, adoptive families and adoptees shared stories of everyday life in social media.

Adopted friends, grown together, that is also Joy of Adoption. "When you meet again, the air is filled with joy. You smile, hug, laugh and twirl around wildly."

A guest author's post "Adoption Joy, Our Common Joy" in Interpedia's blog 11.3.2020

INTERPEDIA'S FOREIGN ADOPTION PARTNERS APPROVED BY THE FINNISH ADOPTION BOARD

BULGARIA:

- Family National Association (FNA), Sofia

COLOMBIA:

- Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF), Bogotá
- La Casa de la Madre y el Niño (La Casa), Bogotá
- La Fundación Ayuda a la Infancia Hogar Bambi Chiquitines, Cali
- La Fundación CRAN (Centro para el Reintegro y Atención del Niño), Bogotá

INDIA:

- Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA), New Delhi

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA:

- China Centre for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA), Beijing

SOUTH AFRICA:

- Abba Specialist Adoption & Social Services (Abba), Pretoria

THAILAND:

- Department of Children and Youth (DCY), Bangkok

Development cooperation in 2020



In 2020, Interpedia supported 14 projects and programmes promoting child rights in seven countries, with 13 partner organizations. One project with funding provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs NGO development cooperation project support, two in Nepal and one in Ethiopia. The covid-19 pandemic slowed the progress of projects and caused changes in operations.

In the spring 2020 project application round, Interpedia applied for funding for two projects in Nepal and one in Ethiopia. We received funding for two projects, one in each country for 2021–2024. In the autumn of 2020, we also participated in the first phase of the application round for programme-based support for Finnish CSOs from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the call for applications continued in 2021 with a second round. After a break of several years, we applied for the Ministry



"This too can be achieved through development cooperation: a model school in a remote rural area of Nepal and a significant reduction in child marriages."

Blog post of Project Coordinator Anu Karvinen "Our development cooperation project in Nepal brings quality to schools and strengthens child rights" in Interpedia's blog on 4.3.2020.



Our volunteer Nora returned home from Nepal. In her blog post (May 8, 2020) Volunteering in Nepal during covid-19, Nora wrote about how the pandemic changed her work and daily life in Kathmandu.

for Foreign Affairs' support for civil society organizations' communications and global education projects for our early childhood education project, for which we received funding for 2021–2022.

During 2020, we conducted a customer satisfaction survey and updated the development co-operation project manual, ethical principles, risk mapping guidelines, Policy and Guidelines for Preventing Corruption and other Unethical Behavior, and Code of Conduct on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse, Harassment and All Forms of Violence in Interpedia's Development Co-operation.

In the spring of 2020, development co-operation Project Coordinator Anu Karvinen made monitoring trips to Nepal and Ethiopia. During the trips, the progress of development cooperation projects was monitored, new projects were planned, and visits were made to Finnish embassies.

At the beginning of the year, Interpedia had one volunteer in Nepal at Loo Niva Child Concern Group. However, following the onset of the covid-19 pandemic, monitoring trips and the volunteer program had to be suspended for the rest of the year.

Well-being for children with the support of donors

In 2020, with the support of 900 sponsors and monthly donors, we implemented 11 programs in seven different countries.

In the programs, we mainly supported the possibility for children to go to school. In addition, some of the programs included education for children, parents, and the community as a whole, for example on disability and child rights. We also supported small businesses and various income generation initiatives. Some programs provided therapy and social services to families, organized various leisure activities and care services, and some supported for example orphanages.

The covid-19 pandemic affected the operations of almost all programs. Some partners had to suspend their operations altogether when schools and day care centers were closed in many countries. Some adjusted their work and were able to operate for a part of the year. During the year, we organized fundraising efforts to support the work of partner organization in the midst of the pandemic.

In the beginning of the year, the development co-operation team participated in the Educa fair for the education sector, but other events of the year were canceled due to the covid-19 pandemic.



"We are looking for 10 Finnish schools to start as sponsors for Nepali schools. A warm welcome to join!"

For the Finnish school, the school sponsorship offers a good way to get to know Nepal's culture, customs and children's everyday life."

Start of our sponsorship school campaign on Facebook on 5.8.2020



Greetings from the BFDP family support program in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia:

BFDP employees are continuing their work as far as possible. Family support work continues as long as the guidelines and social distancing in contacts between people are followed.

Beneficiaries have been provided with information about the covid-19 situation and have been grateful for it. There is confusion and uncertainty in the air at the moment.

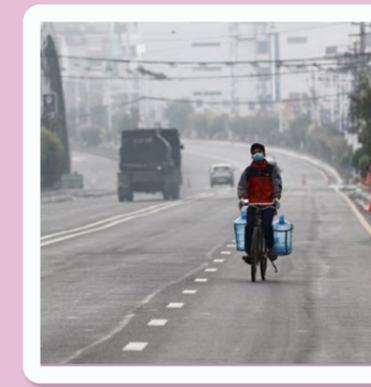
Interpedia on Facebook 15.4.2020



Greetings from Ethiopia:

"Our partner organization Berhan Lehetanat has continued work with children with disabilities by providing them with appliances, medicine, books, hygiene products and masks. In addition, children have been receiving support through discussions over the phone during the difficult times. The schools are expected to open in October."

Interpedia on Facebook 10.9.2020



News from Loo Niva in Nepal:

"Loo Niva pays special attention to the well-being of children in this situation. Schools are closed and children are staying at home. If possible, parents are trying to arrange teaching for them. Many organizations have started online distance learning programs."

Interpedia on Facebook 14.4.2020



Greetings from South Africa from SA Cares for Life:

"SA Cares will continue its work to help the most vulnerable children and families by providing food and hygiene products, caring for the sick and educating the community. Day care centers are closed and home visits to families are not made for the time being."

Interpedia on Facebook 22.4.2020



Project L.I.F.E from Thailand:

"Life in the country has almost returned to normal, but still people have to keep their distance. Schools and the centers of the organization are already open, and staff have been able to visit sponsored children and their families in slums <3"

Interpedia on Facebook 15.9.2020



Higher standards in development cooperation

When I started in Interpedia five years ago, our work was overshadowed by the sudden cuts in development funding in 2015. The cuts gradually began to affect our work as well as the work of our partners, and the following years were tough. Fortunately, we have managed to overcome those challenges with most partners and our work continues.

The declining number of donors has also been our challenge for a long time. Our competitors in that field are large international organizations, so gaining visibility is not easy. Now the decline seems to be leveling off and for this we can thank the loyal supporters of our work, who appreciate a small Finnish organization focusing on sustainable long-term efforts.

The best thing about this work is the versatility, as in a small organization the work is very diverse. Our networks extend in many directions, as we work in seven different countries with very diverse partners. In addition, we have many partners in Finland as well. These networks provide many perspectives on what is going on around the world.

COOPERATION WITH LONG-TERM PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The development cooperation done by civil society organizations has become more professional over the years. At Interpedia, of course, the work has been professional for a long time already. However, the level of requirements set by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is constantly higher. For example, more attention is paid to risk management and the measurement of results.

This requires more planning and monitoring from us and our partners.

In my work, in co-operation with long-term partners I have noted that over the years, many long-standing problems have finally been solved successfully. Our partner organizations are able to constantly develop their work. I also respect their ability to operate in challenging environments. There has been political unrest in Ethiopia, and Nepal has faced natural disasters and is now in the midst of a serious pandemic. Our partners have always been able to transform their work and adapt to the current situation.

CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION, PROTECTION AND AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING!

There is a clear focus in our development cooperation: the child's right to education, protection, and an adequate standard of living. There are usually three types of goals in our projects:

1. Increasing children's knowledge and skills and active-ness, reaching the children themselves.
2. Identifying duty-bearers and developing their work and capacity (eg public authorities and school actors). It has been great to see how our partners have developed such insightful ideas for this work.
3. Development of civil society. A free civil society is a prerequisite for real development and a functioning society. It is also important to involve small local grassroots organizations to ensure sustainability.

THE SECOND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INCLUDES SOLVING MULTIFACETED PROBLEMS

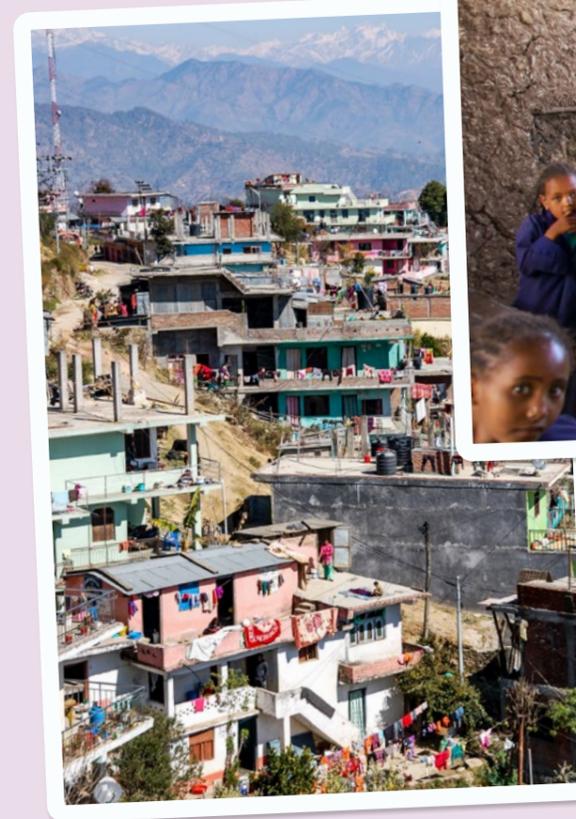
I am motivated by how, together with our partner organization, we identify development challenges, map out their root causes and how they can be addressed. Many things have moved in the right direction and most of our countries of operation are well on track to achieve many of the sustainable development goals. On the other hand, many easy problems have already been solved and more difficult issues now need to be considered.

I lived in Zambia as a child, when my father was working for a largescale project to build schools. A lot of schools have been built in the past as part of development efforts and most children can already start school. However, we now need to solve how to improve the quality of education and reduce school dropouts, so the means of promoting education are different today.

A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past six months, we have formulated Interpedia's development cooperation strategy starting from 2021 and participated in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' application round for programme-based support for Finnish CSOs. We have examined our work as a whole and defined the priorities and goals of our work.

At present, for example, ethical principles and anti-corruption measures as well as the promotion of equality and the fight against sexual abuse are emphasized in the field. We have always acted in accordance with these



principles, but now these issues have been raised more prominently and the related guidelines and procedures have been updated.

For example, the promotion of equality requires systematic measures. We are already promoting many good things, but how could we do our work even better? On these issues, too, the easy things have already been done, and now we need to figure out how we can step up to the next level.

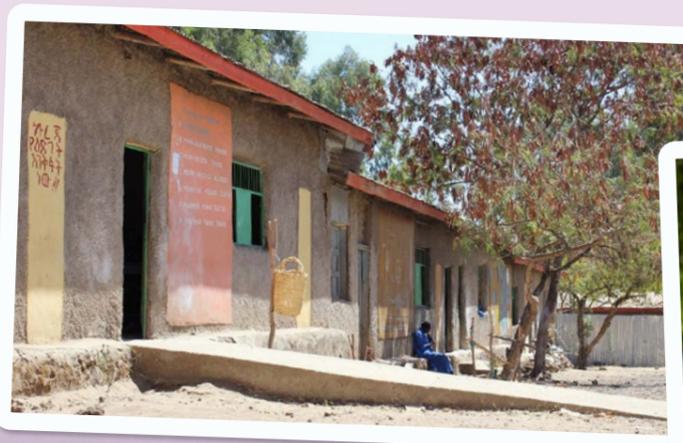
Ilona Kalliola

The author is Interpedia's Director for Development Co-operation. She has worked at Interpedia since 2016 and has a master's degree in social sciences.



Development results from 2020

Our development cooperation projects, supported by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, progressed during 2020 despite the pandemic.



CREATING A SAFE AND EQUITABLE LIVING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN ETHIOPIA 2019–2021

We are implementing the project in the towns of Bishoftu and Dukem together with Berhan Lehetsanat.

Children with disabilities have access to school and rehabilitation as well as to their communities

1. There are 229 children with disabilities in the project area. 73% of children receive rehabilitation services (before 3%). 92 children with disabilities benefited from comprehensive rehabilitation, 54 received medical assistance, 26 assistive devices, seven received physical therapy, and accessibility was improved in the homes of seven children.
2. 78% of children with disabilities attended school (before 51%) as the capacity of schools improved.
3. 14 new children with disabilities started school and 141 continued their education, 25 children with disabilities were supported in accessing a special school, 141 received learning materials and 147 tuition.
4. 63% of children with disabilities improved their learning outcomes. The proportion of teachers able to address special needs in schools rose to 68 % (previously 32 %).
5. 69% of schools are physically accessible (before 20%).
6. 20 young people with disabilities received skills training and access to vocational training for young people with disabilities improved.

Attitudes towards people with disabilities are changing

7. 138 community members and 76 local leaders were trained in disability issues. Representatives of local and non-governmental organizations, as well as school actors and religious leaders, were trained to protect children from various forms of violence.
8. 70 new and 25 old volunteers were trained, and 49 coffee ceremonies were held in the project areas to disseminate information on disability in the communities.



9. As awareness increases, the attitudes of families and communities change: 74% of community members now have a positive attitude towards children with disabilities and their families (previously 45%).
10. The commitment of public administration and healthcare workers to the realization of the rights of people with disabilities increased with awareness raising and training.
11. The referral service system for children with disabilities has been established and will continue to operate after the end of the project.

Support for parents and local organizations of people with disabilities

12. 57 community members participated in hygiene and sanitation trainings and 80 families received material support.
13. 85 guardians of children with disabilities were trained in saving & credit and business activities. One hundred families received fuel-saving stoves and 168 trees were planted.
14. Parents of children with disabilities were trained to demand education and services for their children. Parental involvement in the rehabilitation process of their children has increased.
15. 20 members of organizations of people with disabilities participated in advocacy work. The inclusion of people with disabilities in post-covid-19 humanitarian support in the project area was an indication of the effectiveness of the advocacy work.

ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS – NEPAL 2017–2020

A collaboration project between Loo Niva Child Concern Group, Patan CBR and Interpedia South Lalitpur.

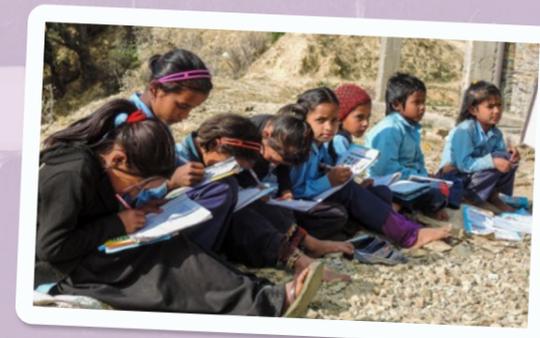


Disabled and casteless children and girls integrated into schools and communities

1. Vulnerable children, such as disabled and casteless children and girls, are increasingly going to school: 82 disabled children, 17 casteless children, 183 girls and 72 otherwise vulnerable children received support to attend school.
2. 21 child clubs are active, and 361 students were trained in child rights, inclusion and positive behavior towards vulnerable children.
3. 85% of vulnerable children receiving educational support reported a reduction in discriminatory practices.
4. 16 children received regular physiotherapy, and some even started to walk for the first time.
5. Many children report a decrease in child marriages in communities

Awareness raising and support for local governments and parents

6. Awareness raising on disabled identity cards entitling to services and grants helped to increase the number of ID card holders.
7. The advocacy work of parents of children with disabilities was strengthened and the establishment of two savings groups provides them with financial support.
8. 577 community members (parents, teachers, leaders) and 98 members of school management committees and parent-teacher associations were trained.
9. Awareness of 304 parents was increased on child rights to e.g. education and government services.
10. 17 schools and two rural municipalities designed and approved guidelines that take children with disabilities into account. Emergency education grant funds were established in six schools.



STRENGTHENING EDUCATION POLICIES AND ENSURING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN NEPAL 2019–2022

The project is being implemented in the Dadeldhura region of the Far West of Nepal in collaboration with Loo Niva Child Concern Group.

School administration development

1. Ajaymeru and Ganyapdhura rural municipalities made their five-year plans child-centered, taking into account inclusion of children with disabilities, child protection, non-violence, non-discrimination and right to education.
2. 58 civil servants and 56 local education authorities from rural municipalities were trained.
3. A handbook on child-friendly education policy was developed to support the work of the provincial government.
4. A district-level education network was formed, which e.g. coordinated and instructed the reopening of schools after the covid-19 closure.
5. Two Education Watch reports mapping education issues were prepared and distributed to policymakers.
6. 25 trained teachers used child-friendly teaching methods in their schools and 16 schools received quality teaching aids.

Education for parents and children

7. 535 parents received information about harmful traditional practices and the importance of education, 15 parents received support for livelihood development.
8. Awareness of parents, children and decisionmakers on education and covid-19 was raised through programs produced on community radio.
9. Supported the activities of 43 child clubs that organized 27 programs for 588 children.
10. Training on the preparation of sanitary pads was provided to 23 girls, who further shared their knowledge in 17 project schools..
11. During the covid-19 lockdown, Loo Niva began a series of radio programs to support learning of school children. The program reached approximately 4 500 basic level and 1 500 secondary students.
12. 8 tuition camps were organized for 187 children (98 girls and 89 boys) after the covid-19 school lockdown period.
13. There are no more children who have dropped out of school in the rural municipality of Ajaymeru. 94 children at risk of dropping out received support to continue their studies.

Interpedia's development co-operation partners in 2020



ETHIOPIA

BETHLEHEM FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (BFDP), DEBRE ZEIT

Out of ultimate poverty through family support

GERMAN CHURCH SCHOOL & SOCIAL CENTER (GSC), ADDIS ABABA

Support for school and destitute families

BERHAN LEHETSANAT, BISHOFTU

Education and rehabilitation for disabled children

MAEDOT, ADDIS ABABA

Day care centres and early education for the poorest children



NEPAL

CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN SOCIAL SERVICES AND HUMAN RIGHTS (CWISH)

Developing the child protection system and schools

LOO NIVA CHILD CONCERN GROUP NEPAL

Opportunity for child-friendly education for children of destitute families

PATAN COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION ORGANIZATION (PATAN CBR), NEPAL

Rehabilitation and education for disabled children



BANGLADESH

FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN (FFC), DHAKA CHILDREN'S HOME

Home and education for children in Dhaka



SOUTH AFRICA

SA CARES FOR LIFE, PRETORIA

Support for the children of plastic city slum



INDIA

DELHI COUNCIL FOR CHILD WELFARE (DCCW)

Education for the children living in the slums of Delhi and rehabilitation for disabled children

FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN (FFC), PODANUR CHILDREN'S HOME, COIMBATORE

Safe environment for growth for abandoned children



COLOMBIA

JARDÍN DE LA NIÑA MARÍA (JNM), A GIRLS' HOME IN BOGOTÁ

Education and a safe environment for growth for girls



THAILAND

PROJECT L.I.F.E. FOUNDATION

Breaking the cycle of poverty with education

Communications

Interpedia's key communications channels were the website, social media channels, e-mail newsletters and leaflets.



facebook.com/interpedia



twitter.com/interpedia_ry



instagram.com/interpedia



www.youtube.com → Interpedia



interpedia.fi/blog_post

Interpedian Frame, Voice, Report (FVR) project Whose voice? Perspectives on ethical development communication ended in 2019, but at the end of 2020 we participated in the closing seminar of the Finnish FVR project, where the results of the Interpedia project were presented. The project came to the fore also in Fingo's FVR video as well as in the joint European FVR final report.



Due to the pandemic, all the information events were held via remote connections after March 2020. We organized 37 info events for applicants in Finnish, one in Swedish, one bilingual (Finnish – Swedish) and two in English. The total attendance in these was about 900. The traditional training event for the grandparents and other significant persons for adoptive children also took place online.



Annual Report 2019



Interpedia wall calendar 2021 was published. This year's theme was Attachment.

Finance

In 2020, Interpedia's adoption service activities were financed through adoption service fees and targeted funding for adoption service provision granted by the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) (EUR 232,100). Post-adoption service received funding from the appropriation granted by the government to Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) for this purpose.

Development cooperation activities are financed through private sponsors and monthly donors, other donations and project funding provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for financial support for development cooperation projects by civil society organizations.

In 2020, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs supported Interpedia's projects by EUR 311,000. The fundrais-

ing from sponsorship activities amounted to EUR 246,731, and other donations received totalled EUR 10,787.

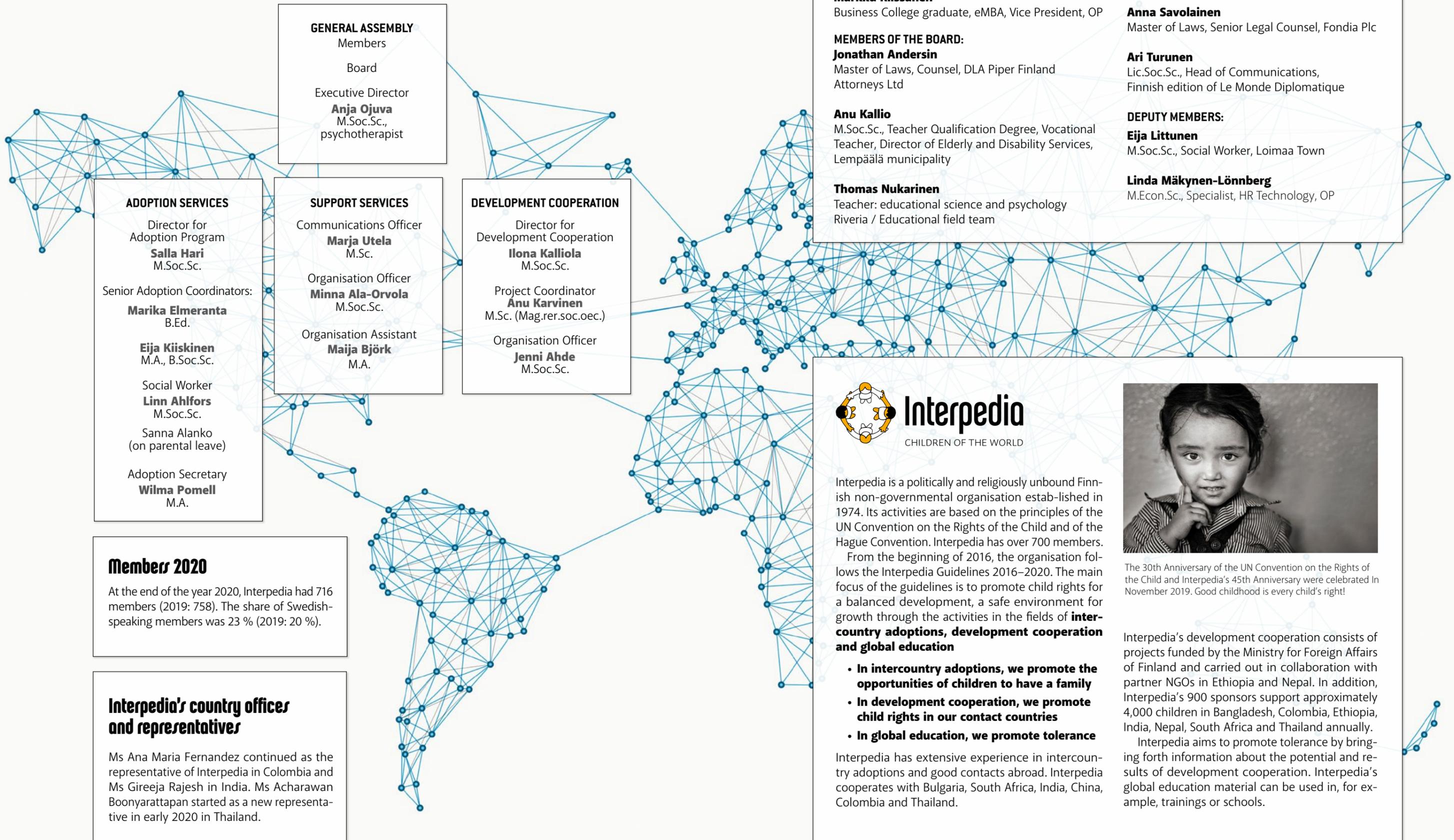
The funding for adoption activities provided by STEA and the funding for development projects by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are significant for the organisation's financial operation.

Interpedia received funding from Brita Maria Renlunds Minne Foundation for organising two information seminars in Swedish. The planning of these events began in late 2020 and they took place in the spring of 2021. A warm thank you to the Foundation for their valuable support to our bilingual work.



Organisation and administration

31.12.2020



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Members

Board

Executive Director

Anja Ojuva

M.Soc.Sc.,
psychotherapist

ADOPTION SERVICES

Director for
Adoption Program

Salla Hari

M.Soc.Sc.

Senior Adoption Coordinators:

Marika Elmeranta

B.Ed.

Eija Kiiskinen

M.A., B.Soc.Sc.

Social Worker

Linn Ahlfors

M.Soc.Sc.

Sanna Alanko
(on parental leave)

Adoption Secretary

Wilma Pomell

M.A.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Communications Officer

Marja Utela

M.Sc.

Organisation Officer

Minna Ala-Orvola

M.Soc.Sc.

Organisation Assistant

Maija Björk

M.A.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Director for
Development Cooperation

Ilona Kalliola

M.Soc.Sc.

Project Coordinator

Anu Karvinen

M.Sc. (Mag.rer.soc.oec.)

Organisation Officer

Jenni Ahde

M.Soc.Sc.

Interpedia's Board 2020

CHAIRMAN:

Markku Riissanen

Business College graduate, eMBA, Vice President, OP

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

Jonathan Andersin

Master of Laws, Counsel, DLA Piper Finland
Attorneys Ltd

Anu Kallio

M.Soc.Sc., Teacher Qualification Degree, Vocational
Teacher, Director of Elderly and Disability Services,
Lempäälä municipality

Thomas Nukarinen

Teacher: educational science and psychology
Riveria / Educational field team

Lasse Rantala

D.Med.Sc. (General Practice), physician,
Salo Health Centre

Anna Savolainen

Master of Laws, Senior Legal Counsel, Fondia Plc

Ari Turunen

Lic.Soc.Sc., Head of Communications,
Finnish edition of Le Monde Diplomatique

DEPUTY MEMBERS:

Eija Littunen

M.Soc.Sc., Social Worker, Loimaa Town

Linda Mäkynen-Lönnberg

M.Econ.Sc., Specialist, HR Technology, OP



Interpedia

CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

Interpedia is a politically and religiously unbound Finnish non-governmental organisation established in 1974. Its activities are based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the Hague Convention. Interpedia has over 700 members.

From the beginning of 2016, the organisation follows the Interpedia Guidelines 2016–2020. The main focus of the guidelines is to promote child rights for a balanced development, a safe environment for growth through the activities in the fields of **inter-country adoptions, development cooperation and global education**

- In intercountry adoptions, we promote the opportunities of children to have a family
- In development cooperation, we promote child rights in our contact countries
- In global education, we promote tolerance

Interpedia has extensive experience in intercountry adoptions and good contacts abroad. Interpedia cooperates with Bulgaria, South Africa, India, China, Colombia and Thailand.



The 30th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Interpedia's 45th Anniversary were celebrated in November 2019. Good childhood is every child's right!

Interpedia's development cooperation consists of projects funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and carried out in collaboration with partner NGOs in Ethiopia and Nepal. In addition, Interpedia's 900 sponsors support approximately 4,000 children in Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, South Africa and Thailand annually.

Interpedia aims to promote tolerance by bringing forth information about the potential and results of development cooperation. Interpedia's global education material can be used in, for example, trainings or schools.

Members 2020

At the end of the year 2020, Interpedia had 716 members (2019: 758). The share of Swedish-speaking members was 23 % (2019: 20 %).

Interpedia's country offices and representatives

Ms Ana Maria Fernandez continued as the representative of Interpedia in Colombia and Ms Gireeja Rajesh in India. Ms Acharawan Boonyarattapan started as a new representative in early 2020 in Thailand.

SUPPORT OUR WORK:

AS A SPONSOR or MONTHLY DONOR

you're supporting **children's access to education**. Your support promotes especially girls', disabled children's and child domestic workers' education. Developing **child protection** and supporting **families** is also our work.

As Interpedia's **MEMBER** you **contribute to our work**, you can **participate in decision-making** and you get **discounts** from our products. Note! Adoptive applicants or sponsors are not automatically Interpedia's members.

**Good childhood
is every child's right.**

AS A CORPORATION SUPPORTER

you're supporting the most vulnerable **children's access to education** and you're implementing **corporate social responsibility**.

With **ETHICAL GIFTS** you're supporting **children and families** in Interpedia's partner countries.

ON YOUR SPECIAL DAY

you can wish that your friends support children through Interpedia instead of material gifts.

Leaving a **LEGACY** gift to support our work makes good childhood possible

You can also support our work through **ONE-TIME DONATION!**



Interpedia

CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

www.interpedia.fi