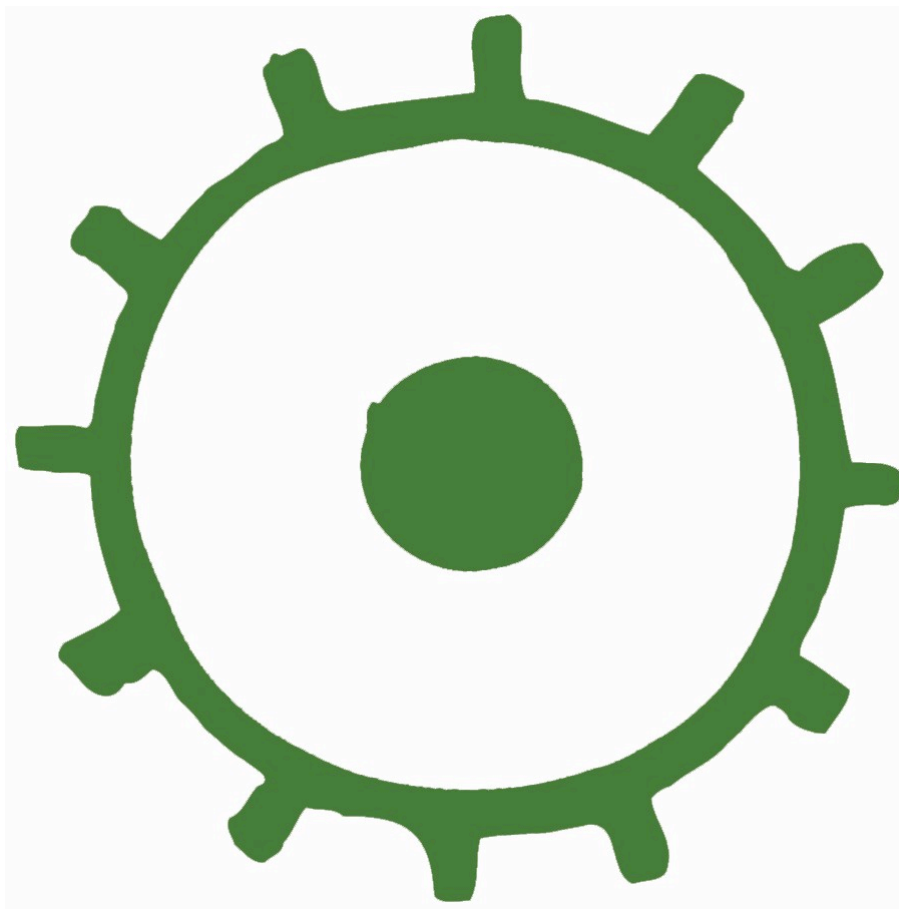


The Åland Islands Peace Institute

www.peace.ax

Research Programme 2014–2017



Research Programme for the Åland Islands Peace Institute 2014–2017

Approved by the Research Council of the Åland Islands Peace Institute on 20 December 2013

Background

The Åland Islands Peace Institute was founded in 1992 as a politically and religiously independent charitable foundation. The foundation's purpose is to promote and support practical activities and research relating to peace and conflict issues in a broad sense, from the vantage point of Åland and its special status.

The Åland Islands Peace Institute is a member of several networks of organisations and institutions working on closely related issues. The Institute has consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC.

Current activities

The Institute's research activities are aimed at promoting a deepening of knowledge and objective discussion that contribute to the peaceful development of society. The research activities are supported and complemented by the Institute's other areas of activity, in particular its efforts to spread knowledge through seminars and other educational and information activities.

The Peace Institute's research is conducted on the basis of the following fundamental principles, which are based on the Institute's statutes and institutional experience:

- The research must contribute to the peaceful development of society and peaceful conflict resolution and conflict prevention;
- The Åland Islands, Nordic countries and Baltic Sea region are natural and central points of reference for the research and for the Peace Institute's activities as a whole. The research may, however, draw on examples and comparisons from other regions in the world, in particular with regard to the relevance of the Åland Example, for instance on issues such as forms of autonomy, demilitarisation, the protection of languages and cultures, and the importance of civil society for democracy;

Moreover, in view of the Peace Institute's interest in non-violence and empowerment, scholarly analyses can and should take account of the role of gender bias and of the vulnerability of specific groups, especially minorities of different kinds. Gender and membership of a minority group thus constitute independent fields of research as well as factors that can be taken into account in research into other issues, such as autonomies, security issues and the relationship between violence and gender.

The Peace Institute's knowledge-building activities are aimed at a broad target group – in Åland, Finland, the Nordic countries and internationally. The Institute's research activities aim to be scientifically relevant and to address issues that have sometimes been neglected. The Institute's research and investigative activities cover the situation in Åland as well as Nordic and international issues. The Åland Islands Peace Institute wants to promote the Ålanders'

international contacts and knowledge of public international law and EU law, international relations and human security. The Institute also wants to contribute to the development of knowledge, analysis and discussion about our own society. The Peace Institute therefore engages in in-depth discussion and research on issues such as autonomies, minorities, violence, demilitarisation and the Baltic Sea region and European development, i.e. subjects that are of great importance for Åland and its neighbouring region as well as being relevant for similar situations elsewhere in the world.

For its international target group the Åland Islands Peace Institute strives to meet the need for knowledge and information on, as well as critical analysis and discussion of, Åland's status and the Åland Example, as a source of inspiration and point of reference in conflict and mediation situations, especially in connection with issues relating to minorities, demilitarisation and forms of autonomy. The Institute's expertise in this field is used for advisory activities, dissemination of information and other involvement in international conflict management and international relations.

The aforementioned principles and target groups are not isolated from each other. The goal is to ensure that the Institute's research activities and projects extend across the various categories where possible. In recent years the Peace Institute has been working actively to strengthen the theoretical basis for and analysis of its practical activities and to analyse scientifically issues relating to security, autonomies and minorities through case studies and in-depth contacts with practitioners. As part of this focus on research into and support for applied activities, the Peace Institute also develops the methodology, establishes the theoretical basis or evaluates the documentation for activities in areas such as non-violence, empowerment and equality as well as girl and boy group methods and the Fair Sex method for combating sexual violence.

In the activities of the Åland Islands Peace Institute the "little peace" in our everyday lives and the "big peace" on the national and international level are viewed as a whole. Most immediately, peace can of course be understood as the absence of armed conflict between states or within states. This is a negative, or passive, definition of violence, although it remains essential in today's remilitarised world and is indispensable for the establishment and development of what is below described as positive, or active, peace.

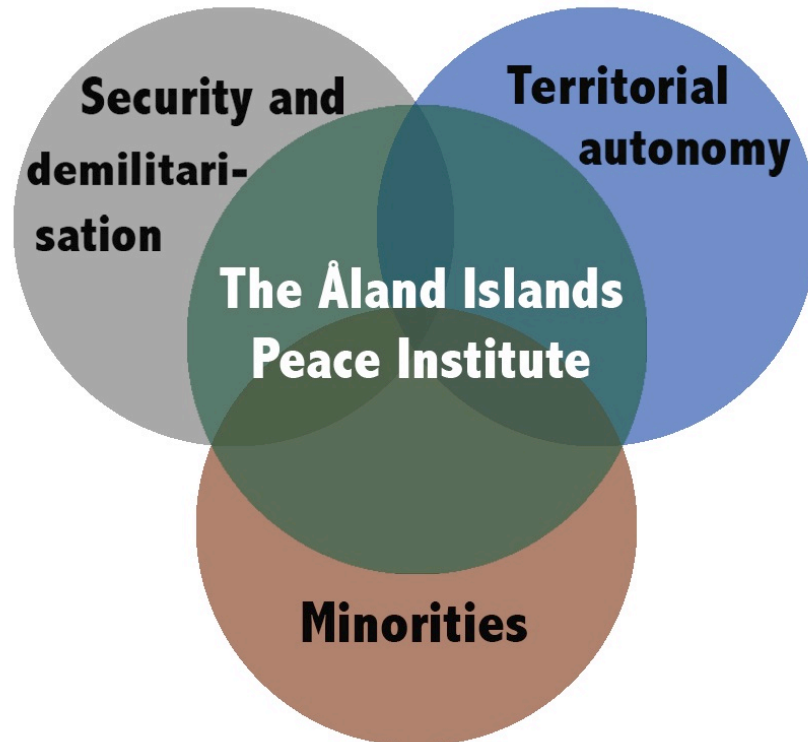
Peace in a broad and positive sense is the absence of violence and the opportunity for individuals to develop their full potential. In that sense peace can be understood both as a goal in itself and as an instrument or condition for the empowerment of human beings, individually and as members of different groups. Using the double-edged analytical instrument of non-violence and empowerment, the Åland Islands Peace Institute promotes research that poses

critical questions in all fields of research. Empowerment is about recognising the equality of individuals and giving them and enabling them to create for themselves the conditions in which they are able to develop their full potential. Institutional structures and restrictions as well as individual actions are both accorded importance and interact to promote or hinder people's opportunities to develop their full potential. Various aspects and forms of participation and exclusion are key elements of empowering individuals (both women and men), minority groups, autonomies and civil society organisations. The Åland Islands Peace Institute has so far been working chiefly on developing and, to a lesser extent, establishing a theoretical basis for methods which promote empowerment with the goal of equality.

The Board of Governors adopts general resolutions governing the activities of the Peace Institute while the Research Council is responsible for the focus of the Institute's research activities. The statutes of the Åland Islands Peace Institute state that the Research Council should consist of at least three qualified experts. Members of the Research Council are appointed for a mandate of two years. The Director of the Peace Institute leads the research activities and acts as secretary for the Research Council.

Focus areas for research

The Peace Institute's original idea of operating in the field where security, autonomy arrangements and the protection of minorities overlap remains scientifically relevant and important. An optical illustration of these overlapping fields is presented below. The Institute's research should take account of structural and processual issues and be capable of uniting interest in the status and vulnerability of individuals with institutional and social



development.

Minorities. The strength and quality of a democracy does not depend solely on the absolute dominance of the majority, but also on the ability to manage and accept difference and diversity. The issue of minorities' right to their own identity and participation in democratic decision-making processes is one of the burning issues in post-war Europe, especially in view of previous and current identity movements' struggles and actions, but also as a result of globalisation and current ethnic, religious and linguistic conflicts around the world.

The impact of migration has strengthened diversity and the existence of overlapping identities, creating an environment where the world in which we live is interpreted in different, sometimes conflicting, ways owing to different philosophies of life and historical experiences. For the Nordic countries the primary issue is perhaps whether it is possible to combine a welfare society, in which the ideal of equality has had a prominent role, with a recognition of cultural diversity and identity. In which ways can these ideals of equality and diversity be brought together? How tolerant are the Nordic societies to those who advocate other modes of life than our own? How can we enable broad and inclusive political participation for minority groups? How should we respond to those who may even be threatening the foundations of democracy? Issues relating to the genesis and elements of identity, legislation and constitutional practice, the relationship between international development and national discussions, and the role of civil society in modern democracy are areas in which the Peace Institute has long experience, not least thanks to the Åland Example's potential as an object of comparative analysis.

Security. The Peace Institute's work on security issues addresses matters of military security and the use of violence as well as human security. The demilitarisation and neutralisation of the Åland Islands are still in need of critical examination in response to the emergence of new security environments and in reference to European and multilateral security cooperation. Åland was demilitarised already in 1856, but the neutralisation of the Islands, i.e. the prohibition of military operations within or against the territory of Åland during wartime came later and has not been analysed and discussed to the same extent. The historical basis for and application of the demilitarisation and neutralisation of the Åland Islands over time still require further scholarly research, not only from a historical perspective but also from a legal, sociological, political science and international perspective. Various forms of Nordic, European and international military cooperation, including alliances, as well as more limited thematic and functional forms of collaboration in areas such as surveillance, border control and air traffic control create new requirements for the status and safeguarding of Åland's demilitarisation and neutralisation. The demilitarisation and neutralisation of the Åland Islands are important not only because they constitute elements of what is known as the Åland Example, but primarily because demilitarisation and neutralisation constitute alternatives to arms races and escalation, i.e. alternatives to violence in international relations. The impact of the fight against terrorism on current concepts of security and perceptions is clear; along with unease about and preoccupation with other types of "new threats", such as environmental and natural disasters, epidemics, cyber-attacks or extreme migration waves, these worries are blurring the already hard-to-draw distinction between peace and war and between civilian and military. Arguably, democratic participation in these developments has been inadequate so far and offers ample scope for closer scrutiny. Ethnic conflicts and territorial tensions, which are often internal, occur both on the wider European continent and in the rest of the world. The connection between these conflicts and issues of identity, including religion, territorial claims and conflict is likely to persist and become stronger in future, presenting relevant fields of research for the Peace Institute.

Autonomy. Territorial and non-territorial autonomy arrangements continue to evolve in the constant interplay between centre and periphery and depending on the definition of what is perceived as centre and what is perceived as periphery. In the Nordic region this is evident with regard to the autonomous islands, i.e. the Åland Islands, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and also in respect of the limited autonomy enjoyed by the Sami in matters which concern them and their traditional territories, especially in Finnmark in Norway. In Europe regionalisation, decentralisation and autonomy issues continue to be discussed and evolve in many countries and territories, while we are also seeing tendencies towards increasing nationalism, hatred of minorities and xenophobia. In many of these autonomy arrangements political self-government is combined with various forms of support for and legal protection of the minority group's language and culture. In the work of the Åland Islands Peace Institute autonomy is viewed as a

collection of ideas and principles, as a network of institutions and also as a process with its own dynamics, direction and players which interact at different levels. Conceptions and theories about the democratic deficit in European cooperation have created a crisis of political legitimacy that is given added impetus by the effects of the current economic crisis in Europe. In such a situation there is a risk that protectionist and introverted nationalist tendencies will strengthen at the same time as an awareness of multiple and overlapping identities and deeper diversity and fluidity point in a different direction. In this context the role, legal status and political strategies of regions in European and Nordic cooperation deserve closer analysis, as such an analysis could provide one possible way out, among many, in the necessary balancing act between local and global, between proximity and distance. Territorial solutions in conflicts are a field where the Åland Islands Peace Institute has already acquired extensive knowledge, which can be deepened through comparative studies on a broader basis, in the Nordic sphere and globally, with the aim of analysing the factors which influence the sustainability and democratic qualities of territorial solutions. There is strong international interest in such knowledge.

Interdisciplinarity and research networks

Openness to *interdisciplinary meetings* and projects is already an important hallmark of the work of the Åland Islands Peace Institute and has been a source of deepened knowledge and inspiration in most of the Institute's projects in recent years. Interdisciplinary work generally requires a longer time perspective, as different scientific methods need to be coordinated, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks need to evolve. The Peace Institute will continue to give priority to interdisciplinary meetings, projects and environments in its fields of research. It will also continue its efforts to forge contacts with established researchers who visit Åland and take part in specific projects and seminars as well as younger researchers who should be offered the opportunity to spend a few weeks or months in Åland to do research and write.

The Åland Islands Peace Institute is a member of several networks of research institutions and other organisations working on closely related issues. The Institute has consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC. During its more than 20 years of activity the Peace Institute has built a broad network of partner organisations working on peace issues or in specialised areas of the Institute's activities (minority issues, equality, violence in intimate relationships, military cooperation, etc.) These partners are based locally in Åland (the Åland University of Applied Sciences and Statistics and Research Åland, ÅSUB) and the rest of Finland (the Peace Union of Finland and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki; Åbo Akademi University, especially the Department of Law; the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy; the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI); the Contact Group between the Government of Åland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland) and in Sweden, for example through contacts with the NAMIS minority research network, the Department of Peace and Conflict Research and the Center for Russian Studies at

Uppsala University and with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in Stockholm. Internationally, the Peace Institute has established partnerships with the European Academy in the South Tyrol (EURAC, the Institute for Minority Rights), where the Institute's Director is a member of the Scientific Advisory Council, and the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Flensburg, Germany. The Peace Institute's participation in the Civic Constellation research network coordinated by the University of Málaga in Spain has given the Institute's researchers an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and make new contacts in the field of democratic participation and parliamentarism. These contacts will be deepened and developed over the next few years, partly through various types of exchanges and joint activities.

The Peace Institute's challenges over the coming period are expected to be of three main types: firstly, the Institute needs to make an active effort to disseminate in various ways the results of its past research activities to different target groups; secondly, the Institute needs to broaden its pool of potential research funders, as the existing basic funding provides little scope for long-term research, and finally the Institute's access to interesting and skilled researchers needs to be secured. Interest in guest researcher visits is already strong and is expected to grow.

Research results

Since its establishment the Peace Institute has promoted research on Åland's autonomy, demilitarisation and neutralisation from an international and comparative perspective, and on the protection of minorities nationally and internationally. The role of civil society in these issues has been and remains a recurring theme in this work, as also in several of the Institute's publications. Early on, the Peace Institute also highlighted the issue of the status and rights of minority women and gender-sensitive methods of empowerment. Over the years this deepening of knowledge has resulted in countless seminars, conferences, both national and international, as well as publications in Swedish, English and Finnish. Of note are the early "Minority Days" and, more recently, a range of seminars and conferences centred on the Åland Example that were organised in collaboration with the Åland Parliament, Finnish Parliament, Åland Government, Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki and Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Notable publications include the following.

The special edition 'Rethinking Territorial Arrangements in Conflict Resolution', in *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights (IJMGR)*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2013) with contributions from several prominent researchers.

'The Åland Example and Its Components – Relevance for International Conflict Resolution' (Sia

Spiliopoulou Åkermark, ed., (2011)

'The Right of Domicile on Åland' (Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, ed., in Swedish 2007, in English 2009);

'Islands of Peace', Susanne Eriksson, Lars Ingmar Johansson & Barbro Sundback, (in Swedish 2006, Finnish 2007, and English 2006);

'International Obligations and National Debates: Minorities around the Baltic Sea' (Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, ed., 2006);

Manuals and research reports on gender and methods for empowerment. See:
<http://www.peace.ax/en/publications/method-materials>

'Tjej- och killgruppsmetodens effekter' (The Effects of the Girl and Boy Group Methods) (Golnar Bahar, Egita Gritane and Jenny Jonstoj, Report from the Åland Islands Peace Institute, No. 3 - 2011)

'Territoriella autonomier i världen' (Territorial Autonomies in the World) (Maria Ackrén, 2006);

'Demilitarised and Neutralised Territories in Europe' (Christer Ahlström, in Swedish and English 2004);

'The Åland Islands, Finland and European Security' (Teija Tiilikainen, in Swedish 2002; also available in Finnish and English);

'Human Rights of Minority Women – A Manual of International Law' (Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, 2000)

Continuity on the research side has been ensured through recurring themes in the Peace Institute's research work and publications: The elements and potential of the Åland Example, the status of the regions in Nordic or European cooperation, demilitarisation as a legal régime and confidence-building measure, security cooperation in Europe, minority rights and participation, and autonomies from a comparative perspective. The Institute's research programmes over the past few years reflect their time by stressing the importance of addressing these issues from a broader vantage point of democratic participation and the human rights and potential of individuals.

Since 2007 the Åland Islands Peace Institute has been producing a report series, published three to four times a year, which is available free of charge on the Institute's website (<http://www.peace.ax/en/publications/report-series>). The theme for the reports, which are written by the Peace Institute's researchers or invited authors, varies within the framework of the Institute's broad fields of expertise. Over the period 2014–2017 these reports will continue

to be published, and the Peace Institute's researchers will also be publishing their findings in international journals and other publications with a view to increasing the spread of the research results and further raising the Institute's status as a research institution with a high standard of expertise.

A selection of reports in the series "Reports from the Åland Islands Peace Institute" (<http://www.peace.ax/en/publications/report-series>):

No. 1-2013 A Peace Institute on Åland. Processes, motives and arguments 1981-1992, *Martha Hannus*

No. 2-2010 "Det internationella kortet" – altruism och egennytta som skäl till att föra fram Ålandsexemplet ("The international card" – altruism and self-interest as reasons to promote the Åland Example), *John Granlund*

No. 1-2010 Regional voices in the European Union – regions with legislative power and multi-level governance. Perspectives for the Åland Islands. *Sarah Stephan*

No. 2-2007 Immigrant Integration on Åland – an exploratory study. *Bogdan State*

In ELDIA, an EU-funded research project, the Åland Islands Peace Institute has been responsible for several legal and institutional reports analysing the status of minority languages and multilingualism in various European countries.

A selection of reports published by researchers affiliated with the Åland Islands Peace Institute in the ELDIA project (Working Papers in European Language Diversity):

GRANS, Lisa. 2012. Legal and Institutional Framework Analysis: Karelian and Estonian in Finland.

ÖST, Heidi. 2012. Legal and Institutional Framework Analysis: Sweden Finnish and Meänkieli in Sweden.

ROTER, Petra. 2012. Legal and Institutional Framework Analysis: Hungarian in Slovenia.

For other reports, see <http://www.peace.ax/en/nyhetsarkiv/20-forskningsprojekt/1602>

[eldia-forskningsprojekt-om-minoritetsprak-en](http://www.eldia-forskningsprojekt-om-minoritetsprak-en) and [\[project.org/index.php/en\]\(http://www.eldia-project.org/index.php/en\)](http://www.eldia-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

In addition to these already published reports the Peace Institute is preparing, in collaboration with other ELDIA researchers, the publication of the final comparative and theoretically based report in the form of a publication issued by an international publishing house.

Focus area for the research programme over the next few years

Over the next four years the following focus area will have a priority status in the Peace Institute's research activities.

The role of the Nordic countries as a region of peace in a globalised world

Nordic cooperation is currently being evaluated both politically and academically. Different views, ideas and plans are being put forward concerning the experience to date and about which priorities and institutional solutions could be on the agenda in the future. In the area of defence practical cooperation has been a reality for many years, for example in the NORDEFECO framework, but without being subject to the type of analysis that would be required from a public international law or peace perspective. Nordic cooperation as a peace-promoting platform and as an enduring and multifaceted multilateral partnership has not been the subject of the analysis and study that it deserves. Demilitarisation and neutralisation are expected to acquire new relevance in this context. Among the questions being posed by the Åland Islands Peace Institute in the framework of its interest in the Nordic region are the following: How do we explain the Nordic peace? What are the achievements of Nordic cooperation? What is the role of the Nordic region as a promoter of peace in the world? Is there a Nordic view on mediation as a method of conflict resolution and, if so, to what extent does this view take account of issues relating to the status of minorities or to autonomy as a potential means of resolving conflicts? What peace arrangements and tools have been used in the Nordic region? Is the Nordic region equally peaceful for all its residents? How are Nordic identity and Nordic cooperation affected by discussions and activities on increased military cooperation? What relationship do the Nordic countries have with the wider Baltic sea region? How have the Nordic autonomies evolved over time and what status do they have today, constitutionally and in Nordic and European cooperation? What is the significance of regional and sub-regional integration and interaction for the status and development of the autonomous regions? How has autonomy as a legal and political tool acquired its status in the Nordic region and in Europe? What is the significance of the EU's Baltic Sea strategy for cooperation in the region? How is Europe handling the disputed regions which exist on the outskirts of the EU? What is the relevance of the Nordic and European experience for other parts of the world with regard to issues such as autonomy arrangements, the protection of minorities, demilitarisation and equality work? Are these experiences relevant for Europe's disputed regions, such as Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus and Kosovo? What role does civil society play in peace issues and democracy? How have the Nordic countries handled issues relating to ethnic and cultural minorities and diversity? Has the Nordic diversity model, if it exists, contributed to the empowerment of minorities?

Within the framework of this complex of issues a number of researchable thematisations can be crystallised, for example:

Security and demilitarisation in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions;

Nordic identities, forms of autonomy in the Nordic region and the notion of autonomy as such in the

Nordic region; Diversity, minorities and participation in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions;

Europe's disputed regions: the issue of a legal vacuum and possible alternatives based on Nordic experiences;

Equality and methods for empowerment in the Åland Islands and the Nordic region;

Gender and violence, especially in the light of UN Resolution 1325 on the status of women in conflicts and in peace-building.

The Åland Islands Peace Institute will be working to develop all these areas in different ways, although some may be promoted primarily through exploratory seminars or minor publications while others will take the form of larger and longer-term research projects.

Other future research activities

The research findings from the multi-year research projects on the elements of the Åland Example (2010–2012) and on European multilingualism (European Language Diversity for All, ELDIA, 2010–2013) will continue to be analysed and presented in various contexts and to different target groups. The development of an information package/course module on the Åland Example is one stage of this work, but this also includes scholarly articles and conference presentations.

These main focus areas will be coupled with more short-term or limited projects in the Peace Institute's areas of expertise, the report series, seminar activities and through visits from guest researchers with special interests. Views on mediation in national and international conflict situations and under current legislation in several countries in Europe, resolution of conflicts in schools, including through school mediation, Åland's participation and influence in the EU, the politics of language in autonomous regions and the relationship between the protection of minorities and integration of immigrants are other areas where the Peace Institute has existing knowledge that can be developed and deepened.