



Annual Report 2013

The Welfare Alliance is a collaborative network of organizations, associations and groups in Norway who are working for the economically, socially and legally disadvantaged.

Main objective:

*To work towards abolishing poverty and making a political impact to create better living conditions and circumstances for economically, socially and legally disadvantaged people
Contribute to increased user participation, better economy and working conditions for our member organizations*

Cooperation and Networking:

The Welfare Alliance has continued the process of developing the organization, and we have in 2013 included five new organizations in The Welfare Alliance's partnership network:

WA continues to work with EAPN and the Nordic countries through the Nordic Welfare Platform, as well as cooperating with various domestic organizations for the implementation of key election events across Norway with a focus on poverty, challenges in the welfare system and social exclusion. In addition one of our member organizations had an important role in the development and implementation of NAV User Representative Courses in several places in the country.

The Welfare Alliance still wants to expand the local focal points that primarily will be to establish WA North and South. Therefore, it has been very important for the Alliance to include new members both in the north and south.

General Assembly at Thon Hotel Åsgårdstrand 13 April

The GA approved the annual report and accounts for 2012. Furthermore, the meeting approved the budget for 2013 by giving the Board the authority to make the necessary adjustments when the grant commitment was available.

Chairman Johanna Engen was re-elected for the second time. GA also elected board members, as well as Control Committee and the Nomination Committee.

The board's work in 2013:

The Board, including alternate members has been 5 women and 5 men. Throughout the year they had eight ordinary meetings and one expanded board seminar in January, which included the control committee and the Secretariat. The Board had an upgrade on board routines created by the Battery, together with the Secretariat in relation to cooperation procedures, planning and organization.

Employees in 2013:

Throughout the year 2 women and 1 man were engaged in full time employment, 1 woman has been employed part time for the cleaning. For a period of six months 1 woman was employed in a 60% position, three of these months as Daily Manager; however her employment ended in September. A free-lance consultant has been in charge of finance reporting and budgeting.

Working environment:

The working environment has at times been challenging due to demanding working conditions. This applies to both the Secretariat and to some extent the work within the board. There are several reasons to this unpredictability and poor structure, and sometimes lack of teamwork and ineffective communication.

Mainly though; there seem to have been a lack of understanding within a smaller group of the board members in regard of a need of maintaining an ongoing loyalty to the work in progress, and to the elected board as one unity. The Board aims to improve this in 2014.

Membership Meetings

In 2013 it were conducted two membership meetings; one in connection with the annual meeting in April and one membership meeting in October. The meeting in April was completed in Åsgårdstrand in Vestfold, where the main focus was the preparation of the annual meeting and The Welfare Alliance's 15 year anniversary.

The meeting in October was carried out in Harstad, where The Welfare Alliance's membership organization The Beehive organized the seminar "I want a job"! In addition we carried out a membership meeting with the focus on the NAV user participation course and introduced this course for all members and invited people from the Beehive's network. WA also cooperated with the Battery in Bodø to implement this two-day meeting.

Elections work

Our Campaign Strategy Group worked with various campaign events and was responsible for the delegation of tasks. Members were from the Salvation Army, NAV users on Karmøy, Meeting Point in Tinn, AKS - Shareholder Association for social justice and inclusion, ASI Nord-Trøndelag, Beehive, Total Rehab and Chairman Johanna Engen. The group completed a number of planning meetings in Oslo where they were working with the planning of various events.

Completed events:

- The campaign "Backward march around Parliament" before the election, together with all committees of the Welfare Alliance and the Battery and the Salvation Army. This is to highlight the Government's backwards policy in the fight against poverty.
- The campaign "Backward march around the city offices" in Alta, cooperation with SISA and Beehive
- Public meeting at City Hall in Alta, cooperation with SISA and Beehive
- Election campaign meeting in Volda, where Team Five was responsible for a public meeting with the Volunteer Center and the reception center in Volda. The mayor was central ushers.
- Two campaign meetings in Kristiansand, where the Children- and Youth Committee was responsible for the first event. The committee organized campaign meetings at the Battery in Kristiansand, where they had invited to marathon meetings with several current politicians in Kristiansand. The subject was mainly focus on children and youth, school lunches and the principle of school being free of charge. The Committee informed well about what The Welfare Alliance and Single Parents Association and their involvement locally in Kristiansand. Other days the Children and Youth Committee lobbied at the stands and talked to many politicians in Kristiansand.
- The second election campaign meeting in Kristiansand came about through collaboration with the Battery when they invited several immigrant organizations to be educated in their understanding of the tradition of a democratic election in Norway. The meeting focused on raising awareness of political interest issues and how best to promote this before and after the elections.
- The event "Poor People's Questions" in Oslo and Sarpsborg was planned, but later canceled as it was too difficult to carry through due to the change of government and budget negotiations. It proved to be a impossible task to get prominent politicians to participate at these events.
- It was sent out a request by the Board of Welfare Alliance government to bring back Social Affairs.
- NAV users on Karmøy organized a campaigning action on Karmøy. It was handed out fliers to all parties and the issues were property of respective representatives, members of parliament and the list of candidates, the mayor and deputy mayor. The parties showed interest for The Welfare Alliance and NAV users as organizations with information on poverty in Norway and solutions from their organizations pages. Several of the representatives showed interest in The SIFO rates, and wanted to know more about who had prepared these rates. Several parties also expressed interest in further cooperation in the next parliamentary term and future municipal elections.
- The committees also worked further with their activities in relation to the election campaign and election aftermath. It was produced film clips for use (YouTube) to view various topics where The Welfare Alliance is concerned. Children and Youth Committee with The Health Committee made a movie that showed a focus on the importance of getting free school meals in primary schools. Regional Policy Committee made a short film that showed the challenges of the NAV system. Two of the committees

produced flyers with their suggestions and demands of politicians before the election which they actively handed out to people at events.

- "After the election" event and Welfare Conference on Karmøy; Kjell Underlid and Johanna Engen lectured. Geir Toskedal held a short presentation. Theme and debate was NAV, poverty and health.

Workmeetings for the committees

Meeting in Fredrikstad 24 - April 26: This session was devoted to the review and preparation of NAV user committees' course where Honoratte Kashale informed participants. The planning of activities related to the campaign was also set in motion at this meeting..

Meeting in Sørmarka 23 – 25 August: The main focus of this two-day gathering was how to influence politicians campaigning period. The Committees planned their work internally in each sample, but also worked on joint projects as for instance contributing to the events called "Poor People Raise Questions". Several of the committees worked hard in the pursuit to learn how to create movie clips to YouTube (and other measures against fall's election run-up). There was also made good progress of work in regard to the NAV user participant courses and recruitment for this project. Project leader Honoratte Kashale showed a presentation of the course content, while committee members had the opportunity to share ideas, suggestions and proposals for how the course should look like.

Work throughout the year in the committees

Apart from the International Committee led by Honoratte Kashale, the Committee of Elections and The Regional Committee the work has not been quite as enthusiastic or visible as hoped for. This has led to us seeing the need of some change in structure, in hope that we might get this change approved by the GA 2014.

The International Committee is in charge of the ongoing coordination of the work within EAPN and thus this group will keep working the same way as before, so will the group taking care of elections and also the Control committee.

Our Chairwoman Johanna Engen is tending EXCO board until the summer of 2015 and has attended three meetings in 2013. Dag Westerheim is tending to various meeting and projects within EAPN.

-EAPNs General Assembly was set in Belgrade in Serbia June 14 to 15: Participating from The Welfare Alliance was Dag Westerheim, Johanna Engen and Per Magnus Øgård

- **PEP - People Experiencing Poverty:** We have, in cooperation with the National Coordinator for 2013, Honoratte Kashale, sent five people from our member organizations to the conference in Brussels in July. The chosen delegation was from the following member organizations: Total Rehab, Exposed Men, Poor House, AFFO and BIBI AMKA.

Other international activities

SMES Europa - Platform Salvation Army, Mental Health Social Exclusion Europe Home-less & Home-first Roma 8-10.mars

The last seven years The Welfare Alliance / EAPN Norway has had an ongoing invitation from SMES to attend SMES Europe annual conference theme. IFB with SMES its 20th anniversary and the theme homeless, housing first, we finally found room for participating this year.

Baltic Sea NGO Network and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Rolf Solvang is a Norwegian member of the Coordinating Committee in the Baltic Sea NGO Network. In 2013 he attended the CC meeting in St Petersburg, Vilnius and Stockholm. He has participated in the preparation and implementation of the Baltic Sea NGO Forum in St Petersburg in April. He has participated in the European Commission's fourth working meeting for EUSBSR in Vilnius in June and at the Workshop on EUSBSR in Helsinki in April. *On the Baltic Sea NGO Network's conference Baltic Sea NGO Forum in St Petersburg in April "Tolerance and cultural diversity in the region of Baltic Sea" Rolf Solvang and four others participated, and we also engaged Mr. Sultan from the Anti-Racist Center inaugurating the theme: "Xenophobia and risks of the religious confrontation in modern societies".*

Attending Study and experience with EAPN Estonia and Dignity International. Learning Forum - experience with participants from all countries in Europe. Strong focus on inspiration and participation in many varieties, both workshop work, study visits and plenary participation where emphasis was placed on physical expression and some posts from participants and Dignity International, as well as visits from organizations in EAPN Estonia and Member of Social Affairs of Estonia. We visited various organizations in the Tallinn area, and we got to stay on the farm where Kärt Meere, head of EAPN Estonia, works with children and young people from poor families.

The Welfare Alliance and partners 2013

The Church City Mission presented by The Battery in Oslo also in 2013 played an important part. The Battery is the secretariat for the Partnership Forum. A Conference Series named "Power and Opportunities", organized by The Battery, has had many participants from The Welfare Alliance member organizations as well as Employees from the Secretariat.

The Battery also acts as an advisory body to the Board and the Secretariat of Welfare Alliance.

The NGO "For the Welfare State"; The Welfare Alliance, along with a number of unions and other organizations are members of this cooperative network. Rolf Solvang represents The Welfare Alliance Board and the Working Group on Welfare Conference.

NGOs in Norway: The Welfare Alliance is a member and engaged in NGOs in Norway by Rolf Solvang, with membership meetings and annual meeting.

We also have cooperation with FO, NTL and Oslo University College in conjunction with the conference planning.

Partnership Forum and the Liaison Committee for economically and socially disadvantaged.

The Welfare Alliance is well represented in the Partnership Forum, where The Battery is Secretariat. Johanna Engen and Dag Westerheim are members of the Partnership Forum representing WA. Honoratte Kashale from Bibi Amka, Stig Rusten for Single Parents Association, Ola Ødegaard for the Foundation Justice for losers, Lars Aasen for Tenants' Association and Stig R. Moe from the Beehive.

Chairman Johanna Engen participates in the Contact Committee where they meet representatives of the government, usually Anniken Huitfeldt, and after the election Robert Eriksen.

Meetings of the Partnership Forum:

February 14: The theme of the work was reviewing what was done in 2012; Hearings in Parliament, and planning of the seminars "Power and Possibilities".

September 29: Looking back at the Partnership Forum's Study held in Arendal week before the election 2013. The Partnership Forum has had positive experiences by attending Arendalsuka 2013. The Forum participated actively in several events. We had stands, were partly responsible for the great poverty interrogation and presentation of the forum on the scene in the square. We found that Arendalsuka is a meeting place where we have a good opportunity to highlight the Partnership Forum, our individual organizations, and to engage in political lobbying.

November 6: The meeting was especially devoted to "Power and Possibilities", State Budget for 2014, in preparation for attendance at hearings of parliamentary committees.

Meetings of the Contact Committee in 2013

3rd December: Input to the state budget in 2015

Focus and activities that have been in relation to NAV in 2013:

The Welfare Alliance is working to increase user representation in NAV's user committees at the municipal and national level. In 2013, we have worked especially with Oslo and have done a survey of user committees in Oslo's boroughs. We have also begun work on mapping nationwide where we have encouraged member organizations to contribute. VA completed four courses seminars in relation to training and recruitment of NAV user participants; in Harstad, Bodø, Kristiansand and Oslo.

Outreach activities

January:

- *Planning the Enough is Enough campaign, Johanna Engen*

- PEP meeting in Bruxelles, coordinator Honor Atte Kashale
- NAV user representative meeting, Honor Atte Kashale
- Save the Children breakfast seminar, Laila Wolle
- Gjensidige Foundation Day Westerheim
- EAPN meeting EUISG, Day Westerheim

February:

- EAPN meeting EUISG, Day Westerheim
- Enough is enough, battery, Johanna Engen
- Housing Seminar in Bodø, Laila Wolle and Johanna Engen
- Budget meeting with SV, Johanna Engen
- NAV key meeting, Day Westerheim
- The magazine Welfare editorial meeting, Johanna Engen

Mars:

- NAV Central meeting, Day Westerheim
- EXCO working meeting in Athens, Johanna Engen
- Homeless first conference in Rome, Johanna Engen, Day Wester Heim and Per Magnus Øgård
- March 8 - celebration in Rjukan, Post v Honor Atte Kashale
- NAV Central user committee meeting, Day Westerheim
- Meeting for Labour and Welfare, Day Wester Heim, Johanna Engen and Laila Wolle
- NAV Oslo Region user committee meeting, Honor Atte Kashale

April:

- Meeting with "Your Oslo," Johanna Engen
- Battery, Bergen, Robin Hood opening, Johanna Engen, Day Wester Heim and Per Magnus Øgård
- Meeting w / Frivilligh. Norway / Nordic Association, Rolf Solvang
- Working Meeting of the Baltic Sea NGO Network in Helsinki, Rolf Solvang
- The magazine Welfare, editorial meeting, Johanna Engen
- Welfare Conference, Laila Wolle
- NGO Forum, St. Petersburg, Rolf Solvang, Per Magnus Øgård, Bo Berger and Jørgen Øgård
- Breakfast Seminar "How to Conduct NAV reform in 15 minutes?"
- Power and Possibilities, Day Wester Heim, Honor Atte Kashale, Johanna Engen, Laila Wolle contains everything
- NAV key user committee meeting, Day Westerheim

May:

- Film Office, Johanna Engen
- NAV evaluation seminar, Day Westerheim
- European Conference, Johanna Engen and Honor Atte Kashale
- EAPN meeting in Bruxelles, Day Westerheim
- Political influence courses, Johanna Engen
- Learning forum in Estonia / Tallinn, Johanna Engen and Laila Wolle
- NAV key user committee meeting, Day Westerheim
- NAV Oslo county user committees, Mona Wettergreen

June:

- Breakfast seminar Red Cross, Mona Wettergreen
- NAV Central user committee meeting, Day Westerheim
- EAPN General Assembly, Serbia, Day Wester Heim, Johanna Engen and Per Magnus Øgård

- Meeting with NAV Østensjø, Mona Wettergreen
- "Ask the parties' craftsman, Honor Atte Kashale
- "That's enough," Johanna Engen, Mona Wettergreen
- PEP meeting in Bruxelles, Honor Atte Kashale, Laila Wolle, Jarle Holseter, Vibeke Gotshalk and Jerry De Leon
- Dandelion march, Johanna Engen and Mona Wettergreen

July: Less activity, holiday etc.

August:

- Election Events

September:

- Election Events

October:

- EAPN Poverty Conference, Brussels, Johanna Engen, Benthe M. Stensrud and Honoratte Kashale
- National effort to combat poverty
- Expertise in front, HiOA, Laila Wolle and Honor Atte Kashale
- EAPN working meeting in EUISG, Day Westerheim

November:

- Seminar / lecture in Svolvær, Honor Atte Kashale
- TRAINING NAV-user committees in Kristiansand, Day Wester Heim, Laila Wolle, Honor Atte Kashale and Stig Moe
- Board Meeting of the welfare state, Rolf
- TRAINING NAV-user committees in Bodø, Laila Wolle, Honor Atte Kashale and Stig Moe
- 4th Annual Forum EUSBSR, Rolf Solvang
- TRAINING NAV user committees in Oslo, Honor Atte Kashale, Laila Wolle and Stig Moe
- EXCO meeting in Iceland, Johanna Engen
- Poor Kingdoms conference Sandefjord, lecture, Laila Wolle
- Round Table Conference in Brussels, Honor Atte Kashale, Rolf Solvang and Petra K. Brooke
- NAV user committees AV.dir., Day Westerheim
- Welfare Conference in Kopervik, Board together with the NAV user in Karmøy
- ADHD Norway, speak at Gardermoen, Laila Wolle

December:

- EAPN, media seminar in Leuven, Per Magnus Øgård
- EAPN - Development Seminar, Honoratte Kashale and Johanna Engen