



## Spotlight on PAVE partner FCA (Finn Church Aid) – An interview with Milla Perukangas

- **A short summary of FCAs tasks within PAVE**

As WP7 leader, FCA together with the Secretariat for the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (the Network) is creating capacity-building tools and facilitating peer-to-peer learning for community-level stakeholders, and policymakers seeking to address issues of violent extremism and build resilience in Western Balkans and MENA region. Based on PAVE partnership's field research findings and learnings from communities we are formulating policy-recommendations to advance resilience in communities and disseminating these in collaboration with PAVE partners to support policymakers with evidence-based approaches to community resilience against all forms of violent extremism.

- **Get to know the PAVE members - a brief interview with Milla Perukangas from FCA**

- **Introduction**

I hold a masters' degree of International Relations from University of Tampere. Past eight years I have worked in the field of peacebuilding and violence preventions with communities and partners in many parts of the world. Currently, my work includes management of projects and partnerships advancing peace in Europe, Middle East and North Africa with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, global peace-building network with approx. 80 members, hosted by Finn Church Aid. Our involvement in PAVE is important part of this work.



- **What do you hope you/ we will achieve with PAVE?**

We are working with all partners collectively to ensure that PAVE offers research evidence-based policy recommendations for policymakers to make informed policies in support of communities affected by violent radicalization and extremism. To this end we at FCA and network team are contributing with formulation of policy-recommendations. Our other main contribution in PAVE is to develop tools and training to support capacity of the key stakeholders to be an agent of resilience in their efforts to prevent violent extremism in all forms.

- **How does your regular work day look and what's the most rewarding part of your job?**

My regular day entails meetings with our partners and members to plan and implement the work carried out in various projects we are involved in field of peacebuilding. In addition, I provide technical support and advise on peace-security related questions to some processes or facilitate trainings or moderate discussions in working groups or platforms we support, and manage our regional team.

- **Job-wise: Did you consider going into a totally different direction at some point or did you always know that this is the work you want to do?**

I remember piece of conversation with a senior professional in beginning of my studies that has guided my choices more than a solid career plan. He said that always go for the opportunities and direction of what really interests you at that time – these might be different things at different times, and most times you are in places where you find it meaningful. This has been guiding principle, and I am still on journey to see where it takes me in future.

- **What is your scientific interest and what are your plans for the future?**

I hope to continue to work in the field of peacebuilding for years to come.



- **What do you wish everybody to see / experience and why?**

I hope that absolutely everyone would have the chance to experience peace, to be treated with dignity and be able to realise their full potential. While writing this we are in a moment where war has erupted again in Europe where we have been enjoying decades of peace and prosperity. We stand reminded of the fragility of peace everywhere. At the same time and in many parts of world we have generations growing up in communities and societies that have not known peace in their lifetimes. We need peace, unity of purpose and everyone's contribution to build solutions to the huge challenges ahead of us as humankind with climate change affecting our home planet, and this cannot happen without peace – we need each other.

- **Getting more personal: What's the best book you've read recently?**

"Fishing for the little pike" from Juhani Karila offers a door to a journey with laughter and tears, taking reader for an adventure in magical Lapland landscape where very universal questions of humanity and today's world are being settled in a small pond with some help of ancient mystical creatures of our Finnish mental landscape. This book's odd gang of characters make up a healing company for any weekend.

- **If you could have dinner with three people (dead or alive), who would they be and why them?**

I would love to have dinner together with my sister and parents, too long since we all sat together.

- **Are you a coffee or tea person?**

I am a coffee person in mornings and tea person from afternoon on wards.