

Library services for newly arrived in Sweden and Gotland

Meeting with the Nordic Library Network in Reykjavik
2018-05-23



■ Who am I?

County librarian of Gotland

Developing projects, education of library staff, networking

Reading promotion, literature, digital competence, democracy, inclusion, diversity, integration etc.

Assembling the **Swedish network for libraries working with multilanguages and services for newly arrived**, within the Swedish Library Association

Spare time: activist in refugee issues, helping unaccompanied minors with accomodation and everyday life, in the board of the Afghan community of Gotland

■ Immigration to Sweden 2015

10 million inhabitants

1,8 million born in other countries

2015 160 000 refugees mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia. 35 000 unaccompanied refugee children mainly from Afghanistan.

Distributed to **all** municipalities in Sweden, often in the countryside in small villages and towns

New situation for swedish public libraries

Big new user group coming to the public libraries, with totally different needs. Big challenge!

Public libraries in the middle of their local society – acted fast to help refugees with basic needs and introduced them to the swedish society, culture and language

Quick start in the new country and into society – need of guidance, support and someone to show the way

Public libraries stepped up – tried to answer to the needs of refugees, developed new services, methods and strategies

■ Acquiring books and media in different languages, language courses, dictionaries, easy-to-read books, books with parallel text in two languages, drivers-licence manuals etc

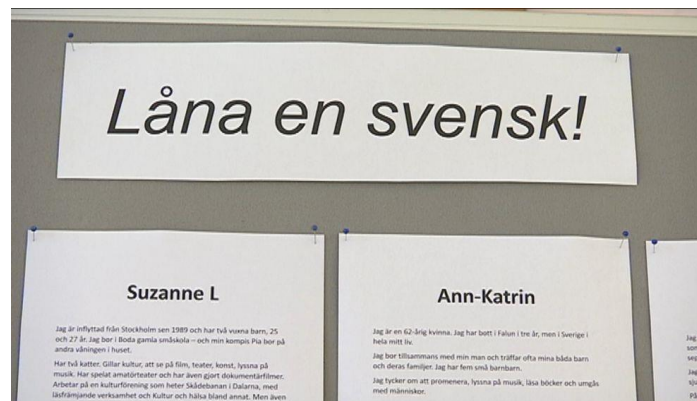
Adapt library rules, change information in webpages och booklets och signs in the library

Libraries became meeting points, a place for asking questions, get help with letters from authorities, use computers and learn swedish

■ Library services for newly arrived

- Shelves "New in Sweden"
- Language cafées
- "Svenska med baby"
- Easy-to-read book clubs
- Language guides
- Social activities för young people





- Multilanguage storytelling for children
- "Borrow a swede"
- Computer courses for newly arrived
- Help with homework for adults and children
- Various intercultural projects

■ Research Carlos Rojas 2015

Newly arrived about the libraries in Stockholm

They come to the library because they are free of charge, inclusive, often close to refugee camps

They use computers and the internet, read newspapers, borrow books, take part of language activities

The library is appreciated as a calm space, where they meet people, ask questions about letters from authorities and their asylum process

■ Newly arrived are very content with the service

When asked for improvements:

- Want the staff to have more knowledge about the situation of refugees, emotionally and bureaucratically
- More knowledge of cultural and religious traditions
- More staff with language skills
- More free activities for newly arrived

The public libraries work with newly arrived – Pilerot m fl

Interviews with public library staff 2017

- More newly arrived – the staff needs to communicate in other languages than swedish
- New demands on literature in other languages than swedish
- New users – new needs, demand of new services, material and media
- New users without knowledge of libraries and their offers. Users often without study background

■ Challenges for the staff:

- Language confusion
- Difficulties in finding and acquiring literature
- Feelings of not being enough
- Emotionally challenging situations

Inspiring:

- Experiences of being really useful
- Inspiring and enriching encounters beyond borders of culture
- Inspiring challenges to find new media and literature
- Finding creative solutions on linguistic challenges
- Competence broadening

Why is the public library important for newly arrived?

Contributes to integration, with focus on the Swedish language

Important meeting place without demands

Enhances democracy

Special activities towards women and children brings good results

Migration and linguistic diversity, the role of public libraries in a multilingual society

Report by the Royal Swedish Library 2017

Compilation of research, reports, statistics and a wide array of examples of activities for newly arrived in libraries

Suggestions of enhancements: national coordination of acquisition of media for linguistic diversity

Lack of longterm strategies for multilingual and multicultural libraries



Stresses the importance with strategic collaboration with authorities and organizations, "Swedish for immigrants". Collaboration with the civil society is very important.

The planning of the services of newly arrived in the library must be involved with other municipal activities and municipal long term strategies.

The services for newly arrived must be sustainable on long terms. Must be adaptable to changes in immigration politics and decisions from authorities

Need for multilingual staff with competence in multiculturalism

Swedish network for work in public libraries with multilanguages and newly arrived

Swedish Library Association

Two meetings every year

30-80 participants from public and county libraries, national institutions as The Royal Library, The International Library, The Agency for Accessible Media

Mail- and facebookgroup for sharing information about our meetings, other conferences, exampels of activities and other interesting information

“We know that public libraries can be a very important resource for newly arrived. With services and activities for newly arrived the libraries contributes once more to the development of the democratic society and participation in social life.

With this network we want to strengthen the participants knowledge about multilingual aspects in the library and knowledge about the target groups by spreading research reports and good examples of what libraries do.

We want to communicate ideas and gather strategies and arguments. Also in purpose to be able to allocate necessary resources.”

- Get together and discuss important subjects and doing networking
- Share ideas, good examples of activities and best practice
- Presentations of research reports
- Ask questions to important national partners etc
- Strategic and methodological discussions



Gotland

60 000 inhabitants

Almedalsbiblioteket integrated public and university library, 9 library branches, 1 library bus

900 asylum seekers 2015

Totally new situation for the whole society and the public libraries

Started a network with the library staff

Network within the department of culture and leisure

Network within the municipal administration



2014 Competence developing day for library staff

2015 Strategic plan for inclusion and diversity in the library services on Gotland

2015 Political decision - library cards for asylum seekers and persons living without permission in Sweden

2016 – 2018 Competence developing project for library staff in antidiscrimination, inclusion and diversity.
Lectures and workshops about cultural meetings and intercultural activities etc.

“New in Sweden”: shelves with books in different languages and easy-to-read books, dictionaries, language courses, childrens books with parallel texts, drivers-licence manuals in different languages, information from authorities etc.

“Borrow a gotlander”

Language cafées

Storytelling for children in two languages

Bags with childrens books in two languages for reading aloud

■ Project multilanguage libraries

2017-2018 Public libraries in Gotland

Swedish department of arts and culture

Adapting the libraries to become more accessible and och relevant för newly arrived

Ask the newly arrived what they want from the library

Visit places where newcomers gather – talk about library services with them

■ Buying more literature in different languages, easy-to-read books in Swedish, dictionaries, language courses, drivers licence manuals etc

Translating library information material, webpages and booklets

Information films about the libraries in different languages

Language guides, translating, drop-in, partaking in library activities

■ Book clubs easy-to-read book, language training

Computer courses in different languages

Intercultural activities:

- Storytelling for children in two languages
- Story-telling cafées for adults in two languages
- Trying to adapt ordinary library activities and events to more than one language.
- Trying to get the library staff to always bear the inclusive multilingual aspects in mind!