

Summery from meeting in Nordic Library Network November 14 at Oodi, Helsinki

There was 29 participants from the Nordic countries at the meeting, and they started the day with presentations in plenum and thereafter in groups.

Knowledge sharing in plenum from the discussions in the groups:

Chat lab in Finnish: The talks are about exchanging culture and traditions from the participants' own countries. When you talk about yourself and your own culture, you get caught up in the conversation in a very different way.

Language course / café: Dialogue between the language teacher (the language mentor) and the student (the café participant) is based on everyday and work situations and thus becomes "training in daily life".

Since one can better reflect one's own ethnicity, it is important library staff has several different ethnicities, so that the new immigrant has "a mirror image" to deal with questions and wishes.

The library has free spaces where the users can arrange courses, meetings, etc. A meeting place can give the immigrants a much needed breaks from being new in the community.

Establishing ambassador libraries where non-trained library users can learn how to use the e-book service. The ambassador libraries contribute at the same time to improving the user experience and marketing the e-services to the users.

Story caravan for preschool children containing double-reading in Finnish and Arabic: It teaches Finnish children some Arabic words while involving the Arabic-speaking children.

In the language café, external "presenters" from the local community are invited. They can tell about various necessary functions that the newcomers should master or can benefit from - for example. bankers, firefighters, telephone companies, sports clubs, etc. Participants are involved in the selection of who / what is needed.

After the presentation Ahmad Joumaa told about the strategy RONN:

RONN

Relations

Openness

Needs

Network

Ahmad told different stories to explain strategy content.

Relations:

Winter bathing - it takes personal relationships to get started

A knitting club meets 2 hours each week when the women from the local asylum center are invited. One of the women was opposed to the asylum women attending, but that changed as she gained personal relationships with the asylum women.

Openness:

A local artist helps asylum seekers tell their story. There was a successful exhibition that ended up being shown in many places in DK.

Libraries should support people's concern for preserving their own identity. Openness is important. The world is becoming more diverse

Needs:

4 English women would do anything for women in Kenya. It took 2 hours for the Kenyan women to fetch water, so they made a well in the village. However, the women were not happy with the solution, as the 2 hours were their spare time, where they were free of children and men, so they could talk freely together.

Dialogue is important to find out what the needs of the groups are.

Network

Quote by Dale Carnegie: "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you"

People want to share their history and experiences. Don't be afraid to ask personal questions.

We need to expand both personal, professional, local, national and international networks.

Resource mapping is a great way to get started.

After lunch there was a guided tour at 'Oodi'.

Users library experiences

We read together:

Anna Skogster (volunteer language trainer) and Nadezda Olesk (participant) told about "We Read Together", which is a national network in Finland, which in most places is housed by libraries. In Oodi you can participate when you have the time and the need, which Nadezda considers a great strength. In addition to reading texts together, you can also ask for anything and get answers to what is needed to know to have a life in Finland. Nadezda greatly appreciates the service and it has helped her in a number of situations over the last 2 years, eg. in avoiding misunderstandings in relation to the child's school. However the focus is on language training. The offer is free and the teachers are volunteers. The library takes care of the marketing of the service and partly of the coordination. In Oodi, the nationalities of the participants are very mixed, which both Anna and Nadezda are very happy with.

Kemê Pellicer:

Kemê is part of Critical Friends and author. She finds it difficult to become part of the community in Helsinki and in relation to the library, even though she was already a trained library user in her home country. However, it is very easy to find language courses as well as opportunities to practice

everyday Finnish. She emphasizes that libraries need to think that immigrants can also contribute to the library's program - not just be a client. However, it is valuable that you can read / borrow literature in your own language, especially as a writer so that you have the opportunity to keep up with the development. Writers who do not write in Finnish / Swedish cannot be members of the trade union in Finland.

Kemê encouraged the libraries to offer courses in the use of new technology, eg 3D printing and the like.

The future of the network

The network is represented at the Nordic Dialogues conference in Oslo on 2 and 3 December.

Read more about the conference: <https://www.kulturradet.no/inkludering/vis/-/konferanse>

After new year we don't know the future. Vibeke Nielsen from Royal Danish Library stop as coordinator. The network have made some recommendations for the Nordic politicians:

- Use the public libraries to integrate refugees and immigrants into the community. The public library is a sanctuary for the target group, and they use it a lot.
- One of the great strengths of public libraries is that they are locally rooted, and they cooperate extensively with other local institutions and organizations. It is important to create a good framework for the public libraries to develop new initiatives with national and local partners.
- Experience shows that a coordinator is needed to run a Nordic network. Hence it is important to have financial means to exchange best practice across national borders in the Nordic countries.

It was agreed that the network should continue and it is important to be able to communicate between meetings. The next meeting can be held in Oslo when the new public library opens in 2020.

19.11.2019

Vibeke Nielsen