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READING AND LITERATURE

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Reading and Literature

- are running themes in this magazine as well as in library work. Methods and tools change, new formats emerge, but reading promotion remains a core task for libraries as well as building purposeful and versatile collections for public use. Lending of fiction is one of the most used library services.

In Finland lending figures are still high compared to the other Nordic countries. There are 18 library loans per capita and year, visits in the physical library have decreased, but virtual visits on library web sites show a rapid growth. There are state grants allocated annually for reading promotion in the physical library and on the web. There are many ways to promote reading. This issue presents a Scandinavian smorgasbord of motivating and inspiring examples.



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Mats Hansson

Good examples and role models to be inspired by!

All children and young people are entitled to those services provided by the library community. And to most people it is apparent that library services to children should be taken as seriously and treated in the same manner as in the case of adults. The public library has a special responsibility to children in creating and strengthening reading habits and offer children knowledge about search methods and the evaluation of information. Through the public library's wide range of media and activities, children are given the opportunity to experience the pleasures of reading and the excitement in gaining knowledge and exploring the realms of the imagination.

Dialogue, interaction and collaboration are increasingly important factors to the evolution of today's library and this is made apparent not least through the activities of children. The needs of children and young people are – more so than before – a measure of operations and they can influence these to a greater extent than before.

The library should encourage curiosity and the enjoyment of reading. For oral storytelling, reading activities and for children and young people's quest for knowledge a library should be a beacon. A library must be active and be able to outreach.

Librarians are better at marketing their work to the general public than before. New methods have been introduced to encourage a love of reading. It uses a broader textual concept and keeps an open view on how a story can be conveyed. More art forms are used,

new coproductions with other cultural operators have been initiated, and there is more ongoing interaction with children.

The difference between concepts of reading promotion and reading stimulus is highlighted. Foremost is the distinction that reading stimulus is considered a broader term than that of promoting reading, which is addressed directly to the individual, and the desire to find the right book for the right child. The insight gained is that in order to meet children's need to bond with their experiences and making their stories available other media

ries. It may look a little different from one municipality to another, and perhaps one can try different paths before arriving at a working partnership. But there is throughout the Nordic region any number of good examples and role models to be inspired by! Good partnerships lay the foundation for a child's language development, cultural experiences and personal creativity. A good partnership will also lay the foundation for lifelong learning and encourage children and young people to achieve coherence in life.



Photo: © Norsk Kulturråd

formats are required such as theatre, music, information and communication technologies.

A prerequisite for successful reading promotion is positive cooperation between the public and school libra-

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Kirjasampo: adventures in reading and challenges in research

According to the latest study pertaining to the use of public libraries in Finland, libraries are still dominant in providing fiction to the people; more than 80 % of the respondents in the study stated that the library is the most important channel for obtaining fiction. The opportunity to borrow fiction from libraries is seen as important and useful to patrons.

Developing information services for fiction

Fiction has always been an essential part of the collections in public libraries in Finland. Thanks to this continuum, libraries are able to offer a diverse range of literature, and therefore opportunities to find new adventures in reading are always available. The long tradition of working with fiction is also evident in the fact that new search tools for finding fiction are constantly being developed in Finland. For example, the first version of the Kaunokki Finnish fiction thesaurus was available as early as 1996 and at the end of the 1990s the indexing of novels in Finnish began.

This development continues in the Kirjasampo database project, a nationwide project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The project involves collaboration to create an online service for fiction that also includes older fiction, the content of which has not yet been systematically classified and indexed. The various criteria and practices, which patrons use to search for fiction, have been taken into consideration during the planning process.

Associations, intuition and similarity between the works of literature are of great significance when searching for

literature. Tools, which assist in making the connections between these books more evident and appeal to the adventure of reading literature, are being developed for the Kirjasampo. These tools call for new types of computer applications, and for this reason the Kirjasampo will be realized with Semantic Web technologies.

The Semantic Web

The Semantic Web is a conglomerate of technologies, which primarily facilitate creating connections between information more efficiently. This technology was utilized early in the development of the Kirjasampo database; the book information in the HelMet classification system was combined with the author information in the author databases of three provincial libraries and used as the basis of the Kirjasampo database. In addition, the project has had easy access to the coordinates of the locations mentioned in the books.

Since the Semantic Web is based on concepts, creating a multi-language system is easy. After converting the HelMet data records, the indexed material, which was originally in Finnish, was immediately available in Swedish and English. This was made possible through the ontologization of the Kaunokki glossary, and its connection to the General Finnish Ontology.

Ontologies are useful to the Kirjasampo also when making searches and calculating automatic book recommendations. Ontologies enable the Kirjasampo to recognize that emperors, shahs, moguls, kings and pharaohs, etc. are all

types of rulers and in this way find connections between books that have been indexed according to these more closely defined terms.

Challenges to research

From the point of view of a researcher in semantic computing, the Kirjasampo database has been an interesting topic because of the diverse and high-quality information it contains. Although there is indeed much Linked Open Data available around the world nowadays, the quality of it is often poor and the classification and indexing of the material is not very detailed semantically speaking. The enthusiasm in the Kirjasampo project toward high-quality and diverse classification and indexing work has offered an excellent foundation on which to construct research pertaining to the real opportunities and advantages of semantic computing.

The development of the data model used in Kirjasampo has been an area of special interest during the project. Firstly, it has been delightful to see how semantic computing technology has adapted extremely well to a procedure in which a model is modified and expanded to answer to new challenges. This was particularly evident in the Kirjasampo project when fiction in Swedish was added to the database. To avoid repetition between the translations when classifying and indexing it and to ensure the different languages and versions of the works were in relation to each other, the entire data model had to be broken down again, a step closer to the four-step division of the FRBRoo model.



Kaisa Hypén



Eetu Mäkelä

New database project offers opportunities to find more adventures in reading

Making this model more complex also brought about new pressures for semantic computing technology and for indexing and search interfaces, which had only been previously tested with simpler materials. This gave way to a new and interesting realm of research, the challenges of which were luckily overcome.

Dimensions of open information

The Kirjasampo project not only gave rise to a search tool for fiction, but it also provided much more. A new type of environment was created to access the library's metadata and traditional working methods were developed, for example, by revising glossaries and making them into ontologies. This has taken more time than expected, but the work can also be utilized in other systems.

On 23 May 2011, we saw an example of this when the material in Kirjasampo was utilized in the experimental HS Open event, which involved the use of open information. The analyses and visualization of the materials reveal, for example, that international detective stories have become longer since the beginning of the 1980s – from 200

pages to 370 pages – but Finnish detective stories did not become longer until the 2000s. Even now, the average number of pages for Finnish detective stories is less than 300. Other results included analyses of the types of topics most likely to receive funding or awards and of how the number of debut authors has increased, as well as an application that located the places associated with Finnish fiction on a map.

The Kirjasampo database can be further developed and its features made more diverse. The more descriptions of works it contains and the more readers comment on them, the better the recommendations are and the easier it is to choose a book. This way, the collections in libraries are more readily visible and available to readers.

Kirjasampo-beta is available in the web: www.kirjasampo.fi.

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KIR SAMP O

For the users the Kirjasampo project is like magic: New connections and recommendations pop up in every search

“Shared reading”: old technology in the era of new digital media

A group of local libraries in Denmark has joined forces with Læseforeningen, a non-profit organisation promoting “shared reading” as a means for people to ‘Get Into Reading’. In contrast to other reading programmes, ‘Get Into Reading’ is not concerned with literacy as such but focuses on making great literature accessible to everybody, irrespective of background and abilities.

As part of the collaboration, a pilot group was initiated in 2010 at Vollsmose library with great success, and currently groups are running in collaboration with Åby and Tårnby libraries. In addition, Fuglebjerg library and Ikast-Brande libraries are implementing the shared reading model as part of a larger health and culture programme. At the time of writing, Læseforeningen is looking forward to training more librarians in the role of reading group facilitators and expanding this programme to yet other libraries.

Accessibility to books, and recently other media, has been at the core of library services since their foundation. In this article I argue that digitalization and computer-mediated technologies cannot stand alone in making literature accessible to those not familiar with library services and reading; it takes such old-fashioned technologies as books and human contact. To enable new readers to enter the world of literature is not merely a matter of accessibility, at least not in its physical or di-

gital form only. In Scandinavia all citizens enjoy free access to public libraries and thus potential unconstrained accessibility to an almost infinite number of reading experiences whether by eye or ear. The issue of accessibility is thus not located in the existence of technologies through which reading experience can be mediated; rather it is to be found in the minds of readers. For some people, making it into the library itself is a barrier that cannot easily be crossed. In some cases, this is because reading has become associated with a history of educational failure and exclusion – through unemployment and poverty – from society at large, and the institutions that form it. For others, it is mental or emotional struggle that prevents them from engaging in reading and human interaction. Thus, getting people into reading takes more than providing the physical or digital space in which reading can be accessed. It takes, I argue, a reader to make a reader.

It might seem far away from the traditional territory of library services to venture into the mental territories of people’s minds. However, this is, as the cognitive revolution has long proclaimed, the only territory still to be claimed. Despite centuries of reading we know next to nothing about the complexity that goes into the making of a reading mind. One thing we do know is, as the American neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf says in her fascinating book *Proust and the Squid*, “we were

never born to read”. There is no such thing as a reading faculty. To read is to make new use of brain functions that have evolved for other purposes, and create circuits and connectivity across vast functional areas of the brain. The reading brain as a result differs fundamentally from the non-reading brain, as shown by evidence that Wolf has gathered from years of studying the dyslectic brain. Reading, she argues, is the greatest mental leap achieved in the history of any single individual, a leap that changes forever the organisation of the brain. The shift is somewhat comparable, though on a different scale, to the change from oral to written cultures; or the change that we witness nowadays with the shift from print to e-reading which again will substantially alter the way in which our brains and, with them, our society are organised. So how do we enable the mental leap into reading, and, once this is achieved, ensure the existence of deep personal engagement and slow reflection of self through literature in a society where easily distracted, hyperlinked e-reading is soon to be the norm?

I shall in the following suggest a model that might just do both.

Get Into Reading

Reading aloud, at first a mere accident to overcome the obstacle of forming a reading group with readers that struggled to read, has become the trademark of the ‘Get Into Reading’ (GIR) programme. Ten years ago Jane Davis,

'Get Into Reading' is not concerned with literacy as such but focuses on making great literature accessible to everybody, irrespective of background and abilities



Mette Steenberg



Photo: Readeronline.org.uk

from the School of English, University of Liverpool, now founder and director of The Reader Organisation, set out with a small grant to explore ways in which to bring great literature down from the library shelves, out of the university, and into the hands of people who needed it most. After the first pilot had run in a public library over a five-week period the project had already laid out what turned out to be a very successful model for engaging people in reading. Now there are more than 300 weekly shared reading groups just in the Liverpool area alone, involving a great number of library services spread over the country. The shared reading model is very simple: a group meets every week for an hour and a half, year out and year in, summer and winter.

Some might drop out, others will join, but the weekly meeting spot and time is never changed.

Here is what The Reader Organisation says about their mission: "We find people who are not readers, or who have lost their connection with literature, people who are isolated, lonely, or who could otherwise benefit from reading books, and bring them together for the simple pleasure of reading aloud and discussing the thoughts and feelings that are evoked."

"Shared reading" represents an interesting mixture of various models and forms of reading. On one hand, it draws on our concept of "reading for pleasure", where you read by yourself

for your own pleasure, often in a private space, alone and silently. On the other hand, it draws on our idea of "reading for formation" according to which we read together, aloud at times, in order to gain knowledge or otherwise (in)form our selves, often in a public space, with formal education being the most dominant setting. "Shared reading" is placed somewhere between these two models. It is "reading for pleasure", yet it is read aloud, together in a public space, and it does imply some kind of (trans)formation. I call it a "personal-instrumental" form of reading based on identity and self-reflection, which involves the cognitive ability to form analogies and create models of self and the world. As a form it draws on a practice already familiar

to most of us: reading aloud to children. As in the classic bedtime reading scenario, the reading group facilitator reads aloud and pauses to allow for reactions and shared reflections. The shared reading is thus made up by the totality of the various responses, ranging from sighs and giggles – if not outbursts of crying and laughter – to discussions of ethical concerns regarding choices and behaviour in fictional and real worlds alike.

Dan Hutto, professor of philosophical psychology, argues in his book *Folk Psychological Narratives* that reading aloud practices are the most significant elements in the development of a folk psychology by which we learn to reason about other people's behaviour. Furthermore, research in autobiogra-

people – account for the fact that shared reading has an effect on mental health. The Reader Organisation has over the years gathered evidence that shared reading is beneficial to people who suffer from depression and other mental disorders. Presently, “shared reading” is being used to great extent within the NHS mental health sector, with more than 40 weekly reading groups in the Merseyside area alone, several of them led by psychiatrists who claim that shared reading has proven the most efficient way to establish dialogue with patients who would otherwise refuse any kind of human interaction.

The ‘Get Into Reading’ programme thus offers a model that builds partnership between library services, the

the work programme itself” thus demonstrating the advantage of such cross sectional collaborations.

I am well aware that for many librarians enabling mental and emotional access to literature through readings groups connecting people with what they read might seem like a task that should perhaps rather lie in the hands of social workers, teachers, or therapists. I could not disagree more. Only when these reading groups are led by trained and dedicated librarians, or volunteers trained in this particular practice and with in-depth experience of reading, can they become a way of connecting libraries with their users and the larger society, an important role which more and more libraries turn to these years. And rightly so,

because within the advances of new technology lies the inherent paradox that as library services have succeeded in providing ever-expanding accessibility through digital space, those very digital platforms threaten to put the physical library space out of use, unless re-invented to facilitate,

as I have suggested here, a new form of accessibility mediated by something as low-tech and old-fashioned as contact between humans beings and books. Let the reading revolution begin!

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Logo for Danish reader organisation

Læseforeningen



phical memory suggests that such “socially situated reminiscing” as reading together or engaging in storytelling about the past over the dinner table are important elements in the formation of identity. Thus the ability to learn how to read other people and form self-identity might explain why The Reader Organisation, turning to the last paragraph of their mission statement, experience that “over time, people build up a confidence that enables them to tell their own stories, as well as to forge close relationships with fellow readers”.

These latter aspects – the shared reading group as not just a way into literature but into one's self and other

health sector, and the third sector in an effort to form a triangle between literature, health and readers. A recent project founded by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media called “Læselystevoks(n)er” is implementing the shared reading model to get struggling adult readers into reading. As part of this project Tårnby librarian Laura Michelsen has successfully integrated the shared reading model within a back-to-work programme at Amager ‘Skovhjelperne’. In a first evaluation of the project, Mads Madsen, the local leader of the ‘forest workers’ emphasizes “the importance of the reading group in creating points of shared reference, which help group members to strengthen social connections within

Innovative collaboration connected with language development in young children



Gerd
Almquist-Tangen

HALLAND REGION

The evolution of language begins very early on in life; several studies have shown that newborns can communicate using non-verbal cues as early as one hour following delivery and can even recognize the voice of their mother during pregnancy.

The most intense period of speech and language development is during the first three years in a child's life, a period during which the brain develops and matures. The early years are critical to the progress of emergent literacy skills and to ensuring a continuous transition into formal reading. But, in order to be able to learn to read and write it requires a phonological awareness. Enhanced language skills can be beneficial for future success in school and working life.

The Speech and Language Chain project in Halland

The 'Speech and Language-chain' project is a language and speech development program for preschool children. During preschool years, the evolution of speech and language is in a very intense and expansive phase. So far there has been no easily available printed material for parents to borrow in order to train or coach their child at home.

In Sweden, the child healthcare nurses screen all preschool children for possible speech and language impairments at the Child Health Centres (CHC) at certain ages. Those identified with delays or impairments are referred to a speech therapist, where treatment may last over an extensive period of time.

Preschool children are very sensitive to language training and they learn a language in interaction with adults, most often a parent. Today most parents have either been offered to buy their own printed material or are given copied stencils.

Aim

The main aim was to create easily accessible material about preschool children with language delay symptoms or impairments, as well as establishing a 'Speech and Language-chain': a cross-over cooperation between the staff at the CHC, speech therapy clinics, kindergartens and libraries, through net-

working, training and workshops in order to give parents and children with special needs, support and help. Finally, instigating extended parental involvement in coaching and playfully accompanying the child into the world of language.

Material and method

A reference group consisting of a speech therapist, pediatric nurse, librarian and preschool staff was formed during 2006-2009. They produced instructional texts about methods regarding the six most common speech and language challenges found among preschool children.



Logo for 'the language network'



Photo: Bjarke Ørsted

The target group was preschool children in the age group three to five, identified with language delay symptoms or impairments.

Result

The result is a set consisting of six different and extensive 'language bags' where each item was chosen to suit the needs of its target audience and tailored for this specific age group. The material requires parental involvement. In total there are 150 bags containing books, games, educational toys, games, puzzles and CDs. The bags also contain instructional DVDs aimed especially at parents who themselves have reading difficulties and/or parents from a different cultural background. Likewise there are instruction cards in Braille found in the bags.

Summary

The material is easily available, parents can borrow it at their local library; there are no diagnoses made or referral

claims. The bags are also available at the speech therapist as part of the therapy. The main objective is for parents and their children to play and practice by using the items in the bags to discover language as a pleasurable experience. The unbroken chain are the parents, the CHC staff, the speech therapist, the kindergarten staff and the librarian all working towards one goal, one vision; that all children, regardless of circumstances, are entitled to a rich and vibrant language.

The project has been granted funds from the Swedish Arts Council and will be evaluated by a licensed speech therapist.

The set consists of six bags representing four different aspects:

Grammar: Two bags that focus on managerial grammar and sentence structure. It also assists the child in finding a flow within the narrative.

Vocabulary: Two bags in order to coach the child to acquire a substantial and varied vocabulary.

Linguistic interaction: This bag is created so as to stimulate linguistic interaction. Children with language impairments very often have difficulty getting into the game, finding it difficult to find the right level. They need support, guidance and directions to enter the game whereby they may practice their skills to compromise, cooperate and resolve conflicts.

Language audio/motor skills: This bag is composed of material to aid the child in finding the right mouth muscles and by doing so managing language sounds as well as practicing articulating words.

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**Solveig
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● UPPSALA

The language network in Uppsala Libraries, childcare centres and family centres / open preschools in Uppsala County will over a two year period interact and learn from each other. The project has a public health perspective.

A never-ending story

An earlier project laid the foundation for an expanded cooperation between libraries and child care in the county. Now, we also involve family centres / open preschools. The aim is to increase involvement on the whole, but with special focus on children and parents whose first language is not Swedish. The measurable targets are that 80% of the parents should collect the gift-book *Knock or The Animal Book*; that 80% of the staff should make use of our inspirational material, including a 'language case', and that an agreement between the partners should be written for it to become less dependent on individuals. Interest in participating is great from open pre-schools, as well as from libraries, less so from the child health care clinics. We have made a 'zero-measurement' in the form of a web survey of all clinics, libraries and open pre-schools in the county who will then be monitored to see if the project activities in the four participating municipalities in the project play any significant role.

Method

As usual our projects are collaborative in the form of commendable lecturers, followed by discussions on what can be applied on a local level, which is an important feature. Lectures are all about collaboration across administrative boundaries, a child's language development; particularly processes

where several languages are spoken in a family; how we respond to other cultures, and finally a lecture on body language where we spend time with the kids. Besides training, we try to find methods that suit today's parents to support them in laying a good foundation for their children's language development. Including a long-awaited film showing how very young children are susceptible to children's literature. Films will be the factor to convince how children communicate long before they have acquired the words. The films can be used for parents and within an in-service instructional context. The 'language bags' need also to be made available at Open preschools.

Multilingual children and parents

The planning team consists of representatives from each profession, with a regional commission and one from the operational side. BVC-speech therapist Laleh Nayeb, with a background in Iran, is a great asset to the project focusing on children in multilingual environments. In addition to clinical work as a speech therapist, she is also preparing a thesis on the subject. We also intend to translate the folder *A child - multiple languages*, written by Monica Westerlund, associate professor and speech therapist, into the most frequent foreign languages to present to parents who are concerned about approaching multilingualism.

Professional collaboration

As the project name states we are forming local 'language networks' with various professions. A total of nine in four of the county's eight municipalities are at work. From their very different circumstances they meet and decide how their collaboration should

evolve and what can be developed. In projects where multiple skills are expected to cooperate, it is important to have the basic idea, or the mutual professional object – small children's language development – clearly in mind. If we can agree that developing a rich language environment is a human right and that the three professions of nurses, preschool teachers and children's librarians have an important role to play, we will have come a long way. One difficulty to deal with may be an imbalance in the amount of interest from the people involved, some profession may want it more than the others. How does one take the right approach in making this cooperation triangular and positive?

Results

The project will be accounted for in a report; there will be translated folders, films, etc. But the most important result we hope to achieve is a written agreement and new routines of cooperation to reduce dependency at an individual level. On the local level we will investigate the feasibility of using the taxonomy of cooperation between the BVC and the library, which is described in *Measure and Evaluate - about statistics and efficiency at public libraries* by Malin Ögland et al.

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Translated by Jonathan Pearman

Ways to Read

New forms of reading stimulus

'Ways to Read' is a project undertaken by the county and regional libraries in nine Swedish counties during the years 2007-2011. The goal of 'Ways to Read' has been to find new ways to stimulate reading and linking it to creative and other art forms. Approximately 80 participants from fifty libraries have taken part.

Do we really need more reading projects?

Conveying the reading experience is a library's primary concern and its forms must be constantly revised. The world is changing, the children of the 2010s are not the children of the 1990s and children's librarians come and go.

Where did the idea for the project 'Ways to Read' originate?

The first gateway was an exhilarating travel account from a field trip to Berlin made by the library association's network for young adults in 2005. We were told about the LesArt in Berlin, a place that brought together all sorts of reading art forms and storytelling (<http://www.lesart.org>). Another was the Government survey from the Task Force for Children's Culture (2006), which put forward proposals for literary centres of experimentation and instructions regarding children's literature and we took it from there!

Additional inputs were: The aim of children's libraries, as stated in *Children and young people*, which is based on the Convention on the rights of the child, need to be firmly implemented in the everyday existence at libraries. The expanded concept of text, namely that all forms of artistic expression are texts that tell something, was of course

also included. This should imply the need for libraries to collaborate with others who can contribute whatever is missing at libraries, which traditionally are most associated with written texts.

By what means does 'Ways to Read' differ from other reading projects?

'Ways to Read' differs from other projects by its scale, its many sub-projects and the fact that it stretches across an extensive period of time. Earlier projects have been about displaying a child's perspective in library operations, social orientation and to fill gaps in knowledge theoretically and in practice concerning children's libraries. With 'Ways to Read' we plunged straight into the core issue of children's librarians: the conveyance of the reading experience.

What methods have you used to enthuse participants?

We made use of knowledge building through lectures and exchanging experiences. The forum for exchanging experiences has given great dividends in that participants got to meet several times during a two-day period at the same conference facility in Tallberg. It created a fertile ground for processes to evolve. Follow-ups with individual interim reports, a blog and a study trip to Norway, Denmark, Finland and Gotland have further strengthened the process.

Can you name some of the events the participants took part in?

Book improvisations, book events, poetry workshop at the Museum of Art, drama, Mamma Moo reality show, etc.

What were the results of the project?

Eva Bergstedt, a freelance journalist and information officer, produced a performance evaluation and a year later, an impact evaluation. The objectives of the project was

- that participants could try new forms of reading stimulus for and with children
- that there would be one or more activities in the nine counties that would serve as 'literary houses' in the LesArts spirit
- the existence of economic conditions for a couple of long-term operating forums bringing together different skills for experimentation regarding reading stimulus
- the participants have elevated their media skills and established new contacts for cooperation in their local context.

The results were positive. 81% of the participants said they had changed their views about working with 'Ways to Read'. 84% said they had changed their professional approach. 77% had created new networks. Broadly speaking, the positive results remained with the effect evaluation.

At the time the performance evaluation was completed the objectives of the literary house in the LesArts spirit were not met, but now that the impact assessment was made, we could say that results were above expectations. At Sandviken's City Council a resolution wherein the notion of literary houses be incorporated into a future cultural centre where the library, arts college and art gallery will be operating



The promoters of 'Ways to Read' initiated the use of new activities in the work for reading promotion. Photo from campaign in Visby 2009 with balloons with slogan for reading



**Solveig
Hedenström**

under the same roof. It will be completed in 2013. In Södermanland, Västmanland and Örebro county the Bubble is running its second consecutive summer, a blue motif painted caravan equipped with props to stimulate storytelling in different forms. The Bubble pops up where you usually do not find the libraries, at festivals, beaches, markets, sports events and neighbourhoods without libraries. In Östergötland the idea took form at a web mail site at the Children's Library in Östergötland. In Uppsala County there will shortly be two 'Wandering Story Cupboards', a joint collaborative effort with the Uppland museum. An annual children's literature festival in Falun and an annual meeting / training in the spirit of LesArt at Wik's Castle are other expressions that the literary house idea has taken on.

What are the success factors?

- That the project ran over an extensive period of time providing the opportunity for contemplation and reflection between meetings and giving the opportunity to conveniently analyse the lessons learned at sessions back home.

- Enabling participants to meet in circumstances reminiscent of boarding schools. The disadvantage of such a large catchment area as that of central Sweden could be turned into an advantage. For two days, one left the everyday life; the creative breaks increased and participants had time to feel at ease in each other's company.

- The large number of participants. Networks have been created both within and between the nine counties. With so many involved the quality of discussions reached higher levels and the budget allowed for high-class lecturers. The feeling of being part of a context has been clarified and the participants have been strengthened in their professional capacity and identity.

The project responded to a need and came at the right time. There are times when project ideas fail to appear when most needed, but 'Ways to Read' did'. The LesArt concept from Berlin merged with the need to be immersed in literature and to renew work on reading stimulus.

What will happen after the project?

Each county will continue monitoring the dissemination of various ideas managed by county and regional library management. The project is partly described in *Ways to Read. New forms of reading stimuli* (2010) and *Literary houses. Rooms for Ways to Read* (2011).

A series of texts about children libraries seen from a theoretical point of view, supported by the National Arts Council, previously produced under

the supervision of the Regional Library in Stockholm. The third book in the series: *Children's libraries and reading stimuli - Participation, attitude, cooperation* (2011) have been produced under 'Ways to Read' and is a narrative review of 93 reading projects. The aim is to identify themes and trends by applying appropriate theories to highlight and analyse the factors affecting the projects. The Department of Library and Information Science in Borås has conducted extensive research on all parts of the series. Hopefully, the analysis can provide new insights for the project planners, librarians, and by extension have the children benefit in the form of more enjoyable, varied and imaginative methods in which to encourage reading.

You've tried the concept of a Literary House, is it in your view, a useful concept?

Yes and no. A common objection is that libraries already ARE Literary Houses. Interpreted in such a manner the concept can be rather limiting, or even a provocation. However, if one focuses on work methods and taking cooperative measures with practitioners in other art forms at a level that also changes the professional role – then it becomes something useful and progressive!

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Translated by Jonathan Pearman

A point of view

Library visits are decreasing. Last year – if we count per quarter – saw just 28 per cent of Swedes visit public libraries on a regular basis. Tendencies are the same in most comparable countries, although local exceptions may be noted. Meanwhile, identity issues are discussed as never before throughout the library sector, both in terms of a library's role in its local community and the librarian's professional identity.

These discussions will often take place, either with reference to or based on the type of statistics displaying the 'ordinary' citizen's rate of visits. It goes without saying that it is problematic.

Much of the library sector's activities are not dependent on a wide range of media-consumption or an anonymous and fickle public. Most often, it is the type of activities carried out in collaboration with other organisations such as schools, retirement homes and integration authorities where perhaps the most important work is conducted. Indeed, it is also here we find much of the core competencies that make the librarian profession so enduring. It is very much in environments such as these whereby librarians promote reading abilities – among school-children, young people, newly arrived refugees and the elderly.

Ever since public libraries emerged as a central part in the construction of the Nordic welfare states, and in which the models applied differed slightly between the countries, they have had the promotion of reading in common, and this has constituted something of a mutual core substance to the develop-

ment of these countries. It singled out public libraries from other types of libraries in that they connected to people who might not otherwise have come into contact with literature or enjoyed recreational reading as a natural part in their everyday lives. The welfare state's basic ideal is that it works at its best when it has a critically minded, educated and politically active population. To create these conditions it was encouraged and considered important not only for the individual, but also from a societal point of view. A country with a high level of education was better equipped to develop a democracy based on tolerance and equality. The reading promotional campaigns of public libraries at schools, workplaces and among the elderly came to position itself as an obvious and natural component in building up a society.

However, the situation is different today. The ideology of the welfare state is no longer dominant, not least in Sweden, and much of what was created during the 1900s, which made the country an international role model, is rapidly being de-constructed. The emotive priorities, which made public libraries both prominent and indispensable, are no longer at the fore.

It comes as no surprise that identity issues become interesting. This development has – although it has accelerated dramatically in recent years – been going on for nearly twenty years. It coincides well with the economisation of public life, with its demands for measurability and evaluation – generating interest in visitor statistics – and developments in technology. This has created the commodification of the



information concept, which at present often views the library user as an instrumental information seeker, and not as a complex human being. Libraries deliver media services to customers under the same conditions as all other media providers – broadband companies and others. This has not least, become clear over the past years' discussion about e-books in libraries. But public libraries were never intended to



Joacim Hansson

● When a child learns to read, it does so not in order to gather information, but to conquer a language



Photo: © Norsk Kulturråd

be distributors of publishers' products. When a child learns to read, it does so not in order to gather information, but to conquer a language. When newly arrived refugees take their first faltering steps into a new culture it is the fellowship of language that is the key to mutual acceptance. When the elderly learn the 'Internet' it is not only instrumental information seeking which interests them – they also want to

access the riches of experiences and reading, which make up the digital world.

This is where libraries have their most distinct – and in terms of identity – their strongest role. Herein lies the opportunity to achieve what they once set out to attain – to assist in educating knowledgeable and linguistically capable citizens to take an active part

in the development of society. Through partnerships with schools and other civic stakeholders public libraries can get beneath the superficiality of statistics by applying their operations. Statistics, which can so easily become a hindrance to what is most important to their mission – which is the promotion of reading; contributing to the strengthening of each individual and offering each and one the potential to become active participants in the betterment of the good society. There still remains a foundation for a strong sustainable identity - even when society on the whole fails to do likewise.

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Encounters at the junction

In the novel, *Varasto (The Warehouse)*, by Finnish author Arto Salminen, the young labourer, Carita, says that she has never read a single book, and that she had no intention of doing so: "It's absurd. It's the same as listening to the TV without seeing the picture." Salminen's novel describes low-wage, working-class people living with the perpetual threat of unemployment.

Carita is bound to cramped conditions, to the concreteness of everyday life. The visual world of television is a natural part of the lifestyle, while the symbolic world of literature is a remote phenomenon; too troublesome to put effort into for its liberating and spontaneous promotion of imagination.

Multitudes of people like Carita are living among us. They go in and out of the library entrance, but too often, they just pass by. For these people in particular, the fact that the library is free of charge is an important principle of equality in cultural policy.

Traditionally, different groups of people come together at the library, from toddlers peeping out from their strollers to elderly leaning on their walkers, from the unemployed to entrepreneurs, from those with compulsory education to the university academics. The library is a meeting place where everyone is invited to participate.

The educated middle class uses library services actively. If the middle class, who cover the costs of services, take a stand and buy their own books, the

institution of the library faces a threat of marginalization. For the sake of the poor, the successful should also be kept active in the library's cultural activities.

Culture should not revolve around different classes of people. In a good society, different groups of people communicate with each other, whereas in a society of opposites, like-minded cliques seek confirmation of their beliefs within the same like-minded group.

Patrons assign meanings

Library collections provide an eclectic array of stories and alternative perspectives on people's shared reality. Modern online services provide detailed profiling; these works are suited specifically for you. That is good service. We can nonetheless ask: If the library constitutes the mirror image of the patron, how can the patron exceed his or her own limits?

The diversity of the collection is an extension of the patrons' minds. The collection is organised systematically, but the patrons do not need to proceed linearly; rather, they can go by their own associations. They can proceed from the detective book section to books on law, or to the audio book selection, and pick up a few books from the poetry book display along the way. They can also meet acquaintances on the way, or library staff and get recommendations and book tips, while at the same time broaden their networks.

According to Michel de Certeau, the readers assign meaning and use cultural texts for their own purposes.

Readers are passengers, nomads, who adventurously penetrate new areas and in this way create their own story. Seeing patrons as active producers and as people who assign meanings to daily life makes library work more challenging.

The world comes home

With digital development, the world is coming home and following us wherever we go. Even in small apartments, it is more typical to see a home studio display covering half a wall than to see a bookshelf. We can use our time watching countless television channels, reality TV and American football, or spend time using social media outlets. Leaving the comfort zone requires effort.

The alluring combination of sinking into the soft cushions of one's own couch and quickly becoming consumed in mass entertainment creates hard-core competition for the library. The rate of usage of the library in Finland, however, is still high by international standards. Last year, there were 96 million loans, or 18 loans per inhabitant, and 53 million library visits, or ten visits per inhabitant.

Annual statistics, however, do not reveal detailed profiles of patron groups. Therefore, we need to keep our eyes open. Currently, our library is hosting a 'meet-an-author' event with a well-known author. Attendance is over a hundred, made up of mostly women and people past middle age. There are also young people and some men, some possibly forced to come along as company.



Leninki (The Dress) performed by the author Ilkka Heiskanen in a campaign for getting more men into the library
Photo: Janne Salorant



Jari Paavonheimo

Gathering up men

Man is culture's 'the other'. At cultural events, a man will begin chafing at the bit, and he surreptitiously lifts his sleeve to glance at his watch, wondering how much longer he can stand to be there. Maybe culture is not offered in his language - approachable, with a feeling that it is his own.

Supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture, we began a project in Kerava called *Culture in the Language of Men*, which aims to take men into consideration more readily as library patrons. The basic idea is that the project events are open to everyone. The objective is to promote a low threshold for participation.

One of the nation's leading actors, Ilkka Heiskanen, performed his *Leninki (The Dress)* monologue at the library. *Leninki* is a tragic comedy about a divorced man whose wife left him for a Greek man. Admission to the event was free and the line before the performance stretched out alongside the library.

In spring, the library arranged a hockey night. The popular event proved that

even discussion about sports is a suitable activity in the library. At the same time, it is of course good to remember that overly distinct stereotypes about men and women and the gender roles should not be applied by default.

Events have also been held in the open area of the library's book loans department. Ilkka Heiskanen also performed *Ääneen! (Aloud!)*, an improvisation of an excerpt from a book, at the book loans department. The objective is to bring the library to life more and to present the collections with the aid of artistic performances. Performances may be, for example, theatre, magic, performing, music and reciting.

Our library's rate of usage had increased by five per cent at the beginning of the year. Our opening hours have been extended as a partial self-service, and the library is now open from morning to evening. The peaceful morning hours are well-suited for serving the growing number of seniors, as well as families with children.

Getting the attention of Carita's family

In Arto Salminen's novel, *Varasto*, Carita has a baby. The child's mother and father live in a rough everyday reality. Their workers' gloves are their shackles, the restricting chains of their dreams. The challenge of the library is how to reach parents like them - to bring their children to story hour and into the library circle.

Many authors have told about how the library, in their childhood, had been an important place, a way to go beyond

the boundaries of everyday life. The childhood home of author Anja Snellman, who grew up in the working class neighbourhood of Kallio in Helsinki, was overshadowed by many problems. She felt that she was different, but the library opened up to her another reality.

She went to the Kallio library twice a day and became consumed in her reading: "I was very passionate. I dove into everything wholeheartedly - in my imagination. In reality, I was very timid, a wallflower. I was fervently looking for role models from the art world."

Not everyone becomes an artist. However, the library can provide everyone with substance and ideas for getting through life. It is important for the library to recognise its users. It is also equally important for the library to recognise those who pass it by and know how to grab their attention in the right way. Even Carita, who, on this very day, may be pushing her baby carriage on the corner by the library without giving a thought to the library.

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Translated by Turun Täyskäännös

Literature in the workplace

When launching the Year of Reading 2010, the Ministry of Culture decided that adults who are not regular readers should be the main target group. Libraries thereby received a golden opportunity to promote their services to a section of the population that rarely makes use of them. To reach out to as many adults as possible, workplaces were chosen as the main arena for the Year of Reading project.

The idea for the Year of Reading 2010 was launched by the Norwegian Library Association (NLA) and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). The objective was to reach out to adults who read very infrequently, and to use their workplaces as an arena. Many adults have such poor reading skills that they have difficulty in functioning adequately in the contemporary labour market and in social life. One of the key actors was the Association Read (an idealistic association aiming to generate enthusiasm for reading in the entire population), where I worked as project director for the Year of Reading 2010. The association had already initiated a project called "Read to me, daddy!"; the main purpose of which was to encourage adults (men) to read to their children, and to motivate men (fathers) to become positive reading role models. Through the project Read to me, daddy! reading agents were recruited from the library sector all over the country. These agents have undertaken the dissemination of literature and lectured on the value of reading at meetings with parents in schools and day-care centres. The Association Read also produced the anthology *Read to me, daddy*

for free distribution to stimulate the enthusiasm of would-be readers.

The main objective of the project Read to me, daddy! was well suited to the purpose of the Year of Reading 2010, and we chose to develop this project further during that year. In cooperation with the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority, Association Read and Norwegian Writers' Centre implemented a promotional project that offered visits by authors and reading agents to businesses free of charge. Instead of waiting for busy adults to discover or rediscover the joy of reading books and then visiting the library on their own initiative, the librarians emerged from their accustomed environment and entered the workplaces accompanied by an author. Doubts about the unfamiliar were absolutely tangible on both sides. The library employees found it somewhat scary to intrude into somebody else's working hours. Many businesses also failed to see the value of using working time for this purpose. However, as these visits increased in number and positive feedback flowed in, the ball really started rolling. Many reading agents received a boost to their confidence from a successful business visit or two, and were inspired to contact further enterprises. Many welcomed the visits by the authors as a break from their daily routine, and a number of adults, who would not normally go to cultural events, got a chance to do so in their own workplace. The Association Read compiled the anthology *Clean text* intended to appeal to adult employees, and the books were distributed free of charge during the busi-



ness visits. The objective was to provide samples of the best and most recent books available on the market, and thereby to inspire people to enjoy reading.

Promotion of reading under the auspices of the trade union movement

The trade union movement also chose to make authors' visits a main undertaking. Workplaces all over the country from all conceivable industries have since made use of the offer. In addition to the authors' visits, the unions have distributed packages of books, so that workplaces can have their own libraries. The packages contained a varied selection of fiction for adults, documentary literature, comics and books for children and adolescents. In addition, all the packages contained the anthologies *Clean text* and *Read to me, daddy!* The books were strategically placed in canteens and similar locations. Many employees read all the books in the package, and called for new ones as replacements. This direct access to books has been a popular easy-access opportunity. This is almost reminiscent of advertising: the more you are reminded of a need you are not initially aware of having, the more pressing this need gradually becomes!

Success factors

Facilitation provided by the workplaces in finding suitable premises and informing the employees of the event has been crucial to the authors' visits. Contributions by enthusiastic shop ste-



Opening of Year of Reading 2010.
Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum
Authority handing out free books and
presenting new media from the library.
Photo: © Norsk Kulturråd



**Sigrid Westeng
Odden**

wards or managers have served to ensure the success of the visits. In businesses where the working day involves very repetitive tasks, the experience of a somewhat different working day has been positive. Not all visits have been equally successful, but this may have been because the choice of date was unsuitable. In other businesses the management was unwilling to let the visit take place in working hours, so that it had to be scheduled for the lunch break. An understanding of the potential positive effects of cultural input during working hours has therefore been essential. Not least, the reading agents have obtained a unique opportunity to promote the services of the libraries to a group with a minimal borrowing frequency. They could provide information on the national library card and the opportunity to borrow other types of items, such as films and games, as well as promote local events at the library to adults who may not have visited it before. The threshold for visiting the library has been lowered, in that they now know a librarian who works there, and they also have information about its location and opening hours. Several workplaces have later arranged return visits to the library.

The library – a place to go

Through my year as project director for the Year of Reading 2010 in The Association Read I was really reminded of the unique service that libraries provide to our society. In recent years

libraries have undergone modernization, in terms of premises as well as services, and the librarians whom I met through the project were highly innovative people who embrace social media and other technological innovations with great zeal. Like many others, I was a frequent user of the library in my childhood and youth, but my visits became gradually less frequent as I got older and got a job, a husband and children. The problem was not that I had started to dislike the library, I had only in a sense forgotten how much I used to like it. I have the impression that many other adults feel the same.

In the meanwhile, libraries across the country have transformed themselves into quite different places than the rather dusty spaces with subdued sounds and strict ladies who eyed us sharply when we children giggled a little too noisily. Some cities have allocated modern and elegant premises to their libraries, and this has in itself added to their attraction. However, this is not enough to induce adults who are not regular readers to use the library. In order to reach this group, the librarians must meet them in other places than just the library. The libraries vie for attention in a society where many others wish to make demands on our time, and they therefore face a major task in showcasing themselves.

We need to advertise the fact that the library remains one of the last few value-neutral meeting places left in

contemporary society. Such places are worth taking care of, since most public squares are left deserted in favour of large shopping centres driven by market-based interests. The library also remains one of the few public institutions open to joint activities by several generations. The Year of Reading 2010 has been a golden opportunity to promote this to a wider audience, by inducing people to discover the joy of reading and present this opportunity to people in their own environment, namely their workplace.

The road ahead

The intention was that the Year of Reading 2010 should constitute the start of a four-year reading promotion campaign for the entire nation and the entire population. Unfortunately, no new grant has been forthcoming for the project for literature dissemination at the workplaces, and it will be difficult to continue the work we started in 2010. Creating something new in a new arena is not easy, and the project took time to find its final form. Many are entrenched in old notions of what libraries are. If we want these barriers to be broken down, the libraries must demonstrate what they are and make themselves visible, not only within the libraries themselves, but also in other arenas of society. I believe that the record number of visitors to Norwegian libraries registered in 2010 is no coincidence.

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Translated by Akasie språktjenester AS

All of Rogaland county is reading

One of the most popular reading projects in Stavanger will be set in motion this autumn for the fourth year in succession. *All of Rogaland county is reading* revolves around Sølverget – Stavanger Public Library and Cultural Centre giving away 50,000 books to people in the region in order to create a common reading experience. The project has resulted in libraries getting a massive amount of media publicity and borrowers being attracted to their local library to collect their free book.

The project owner is Sølverget, which is Stavanger's public library and cultural centre: Stavanger is a city in the county of Rogaland, situated in western Norway. Sølverget's vision is to be the heart and mind of the city. It comprises both a cinema and a library, and is Stavanger's most visited cultural attraction.

The project started on a smaller scale in 2008 under the title, *The whole city is reading*, when Stavanger was chosen as a European city of culture. The goal was to get as many people as possible reading the same book in Stavanger and its environs, and hence achieve a common reading experience. The idea to get everyone in a whole city reading the same book came from the USA, which has The Big Read.

In 2009 the project was expanded when as many as 50,000 books were given away at selected libraries in Rogaland county. In 2010 the project formally became regional and all the libraries in Rogaland county contributed.

To reach as many readers as possible we are kick-starting the project every

autumn by linking up to the annual literature festival called 'Kapittel, Stavanger International Festival for Literature and Freedom of Speech.' The reading project is launched the weekend before the festival begins in order to get maximum press coverage and so that people have a few days to prepare themselves by reading the book before the start of the festival. Several of the programme items during the festival are directly connected to the reading project.

Book choices from year to year

Using different methods of choosing the books from year to year has created variety in the choice of books and this gives the project freedom to react to tendencies in society. Nevertheless, there are a couple of basic criteria at its core:

- the book has to appeal to a broad audience
- it should not be a book that most people have already read.

In the first year, everyone in Stavanger was encouraged to suggest a book they thought everyone should read. The five books which got the most votes, plus five books chosen by a jury, were listed on a voting slip and people could decide which title should be the winner.

The book that won, by a whisker, was *Kaninbyen (Rabbit City)* by the author Arild Rein. The book is a novel about the darker side of society in the oil boom city Stavanger. Many thought this a rather surprising choice in that the author had previously been something of an undiscovered talent. For us it was rather a confirmation that



Pricewinner 2010 Arild Rein in Stavanger



people wanted these hidden treasures and in addition wanted to tell others about these lesser-known but worthwhile reading experiences. This is an indication that Sølverget has achieved something by its efforts over many years to promote fiction that would otherwise drown in the marketing of bestsellers.

Using voting slips has to be regarded as a stroke of genius, in that it resulted in the promotion of not just one book, but of all the ten finalists. The list

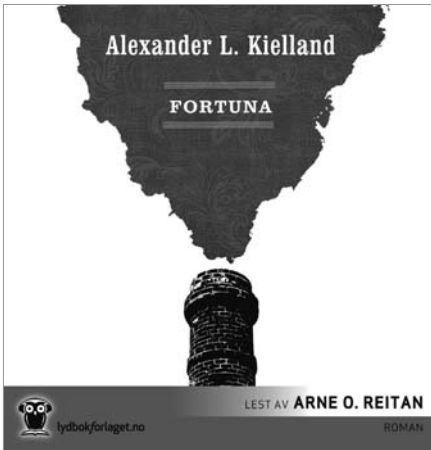


Linn Tønnessen

Many more libraries ought to try and acquire funding for projects by seeking financial support from new collaboration partners such as banks and key companies



nger. Photo: Aftenbladet



could be seen as a 'best of' list where all the finalists became big reader successes.

The next book in fact chose itself, in that the financial crisis hit us for six in the course of September 2008. It gave us the opportunity to dust the cobwebs off an outstanding Norwegian novel on the topic, namely *Fortuna* by Alexander L. Kielland (1849-1906).

The idea to choose Kielland's novel resulted in two important collaborators being included in the project, namely Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and Industry and LO Rogaland (TUC branch for Rogaland) – LO is Norway's largest employee organisation. Together we applied for funding for the project from SpareBank 1 SR-Bank, which supports many cultural events. The book choice and our collaborators secured us 400,000 Norwegian kroner (52,000 Euro) for the project from the bank's 'gift fund'.

As Kielland died many years ago his books are free to distribute, which

meant we did not have to pay royalties. Therefore we could afford to print as many as 50,000 copies of the book. This gave us a better opportunity to reach a wider public beyond the Stavanger city limits. Consequently we changed the name of the project to *All of Rogaland county is reading*. We then had enough books to be able to target more arenas for distribution: for example we gave books to all the city's taxi drivers.

The bank was very satisfied with the collaboration and wanted to give further support to the project, which meant a more predictable situation for our work from one year to the next. A new collaborator, Rogaland County Library, provided a channel of communication with libraries in the region and we could then plan long-term on the question of maintaining the size of the project.

In 2010 Rogaland County Library received 250,000 Norwegian kroner (32,600 Euro) in support for *All of Rogaland county is reading* from Reading Year 2010 – a key priority of the Ministry of Culture and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority that focuses on reading. The funds were used to enhance the project in 2010 when Einar O. Risa's book *Kanne og Søn 1889-1922* was chosen from suggestions received from the public. His book is the first in a series of novels recounting the history of Stavanger from 1889 up to the present day.

Cooperation with the libraries in the county was more active this year, as the libraries themselves took responsibility

for various events. Among other activities, some enthusiastic library employees gave out books at holiday camps and on boats that take commuters between the islands and over the fjords. The author also participated in book-signing sessions. In addition we cooperated with museums in the Stavanger region so that we were able to market the project through their channels and we had several collaborative events. This year, for the first time, we had printed T-shirts and made an audio book/Daisy book in cooperation with NLB (Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille). This was sent to all the counties in Norway. In addition we made a leaflet about the author, which was included, and this was particularly popular with literature groups and reading circles.

In 2011 the project leaders wanted more young people represented on the jury. This was successful as the title that won, Lene Ask's book *Hitler, Jesus og farfar* (*Hitler, Jesus and Grandfather*) had a wide appeal both among youth representatives and the other jury members. The book describes one person's experience of growing up in an evangelical chapel environment in Stavanger and the path life takes from there. We will have a stronger focus on cooperation with upper secondary schools this year, as the book is especially suited to this target group.

How does Sølvberget work with the project?

Sølvberget regards equality in the organisation as very important, which means that everyone has to do their bit at every level, such as information desk



winner 2010 Lene Ask
Photo: Aftenbladet

- In Gjøvik 5,000 copies of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's classic *En glad gutt* (*A Happy Boy*) was distributed free to commemorate the town's 150-year – and of course to mark the campaign

duty and tidying away books etc. Everyone who is employed in the library does the same tasks, even the specialised tasks such as registration etc. Project work comes on top of their normal work and so *All of Rogaland county is reading* is a matrix-organised project. This means that the project is possible because employees put in an extra effort over an intensive period.

We can see that our experience from *All of Rogaland county is reading* has made us more structured and professional when it comes to organising and running projects, but we can always find room for improvement. Consequently almost half of Sølvsberget's 60 employees were sent on a foundation course in project management. This means that many of us now have a better understanding of the various aspects of project work.

Project partners

The project in 2011 will be a cooperation between Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and Industry, LO Rogaland, Rogaland County Council and Sølvsberget. These partners represent an important tool for reaching out to new target groups. Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and Industry will include the free book in their members' magazine *Rosenkilden* which goes out to all the business leaders in the Stavanger region. The members' magazine is sent out ahead of the project start every autumn and there is always an article in the magazine that describes this year's project and the thought process behind the book choice. Cooperation with LO Rogaland is a strength and gives the project potential, which we

can certainly exploit even better in the future. Rogaland County Council provides a better foundation for the project as it gives access to a good network throughout the whole county.

Collaborating partners are important when it comes to procuring funding from several places. Many more libraries ought to try and acquire funding for projects by seeking financial support from new collaboration partners such as banks and key companies.

Value transferability and sharing culture

Sølvsberget has gained valuable experience from *All of Rogaland county is reading* and is trying to share this with as many others as possible. We maintain that this type of project could be successfully carried out in both large and small locations. Several places have already been inspired by our work, for

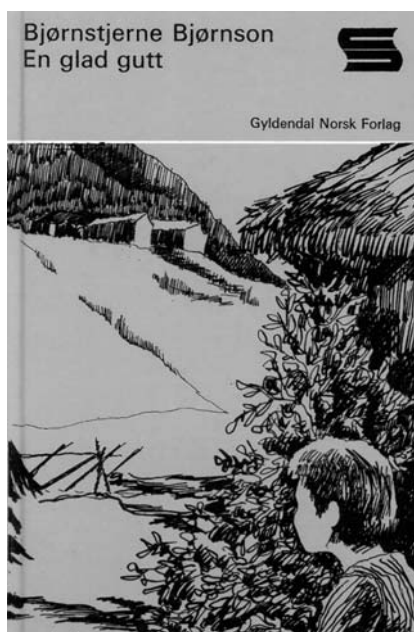
example the town of Gjøvik with its own *All of Gjøvik is reading* this year. They printed 5,000 copies of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's classic *En glad gutt* (*A Happy Boy*) to commemorate the town's 150-year jubilee after being inspired by our project. The city of Bergen has also been inspired to make its own version called *Bergen is reading*.

Good publicity for the libraries

The Rogaland project has resulted in good publicity for the libraries, which are not exactly famous for blowing their own trumpets about their services.

The individual libraries do not need 'media geniuses' to draw attention to themselves. The project *All of Rogaland county is reading* has become a 'talking point' and in fact sells itself. The fact that we have something free to give away means we attract people to the libraries so they can collect the book and at the same time they discover what their local library has to offer.

The simplest is often the best: the project comprises simply giving out free books. One does not have to be an accomplished salesperson to be able to smile and offer a free book – that is something everyone can manage!



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Translated by Akasie språktjeneste AS

Journeys through time, space and garbage removal



Päivi Jokitalo

In the Finnish bilingual town of Jakobstad with a Swedish-speaking majority of 56 percent, working in and with two languages is the norm. It may come naturally but it doesn't always come cheap. This is where the tradition of cooperation is a big help. Another plus is an enthusiastic and experienced professional, such as Monica Borg-Sunabacka, manager of the Children's and Youth Service Department.

Once upon a time

Earlier this year Borg-Sunabacka met with representatives from the local museum, Aspegren Gardens, Arctic Museum Nanoq, municipal cultural department and regional children's culture network BARK to plan a joint project with a historical perspective for school children which will take place in April 2012.

The project will take children in the 5th grade back to 1944 when their hometown was being bombed during World War II. *Anita Andersson*, a children's novel by local author Wawa Stürmer will help the 11-year-olds get a glimpse of the life of their coevals at the home front in Jakobstad. The 14-15-year-olds will learn about the time of the civil war in 1918 through another local novel, *Klyftan (The Gulf)*, by Anna Bondestam.

While the library will cooperate with the schools, provide the children with the books and translate Stürmer's book into Finnish, The BARK network will offer clothing and accessories for the journeys through time to make it all the more real for the children. The two museums will help in realizing the out-

ward circumstances and work with the background material. The Gardens will arrange the journeys in time for children in the 3rd year.

Garbage men, firefighters and ambulance drivers

Not every project or service is offered in both languages, though, and it doesn't always have to do with resources. Sometimes there just isn't enough interest in a service form in both languages. Another factor is the availability of partners in the respective languages, tells Monica Borg-Sunabacka.

A case in point are the story hours copied from Sweden based on a series of picture books for children. The books present professionals from different fields: the police, waste collection, fire service, ambulance service and bus transportation. The popular story hours have been held by real-life bus drivers, policemen and firemen who have read the books to groups of enthusiastic pre-school children at the library in Jakobstad. While five Swedish-speaking professionals have participated, only the fire engine book has been read for the Finnish-speaking children.

Popular science at Space Club

When the library arranged the Children's University on astronomy with the well-known professor Esko Valtaoja, no grown-ups (apart from the library staff) were allowed. The Child-Uni is a collaboration between the library, the local newspaper *Österbotrens Tidning* and the Department of Child Pedagogy at the Åbo Akademi

University in Jakobstad. All the activities happen outside school hours.



According to Monica Borg-Sunabacka, there are plenty of experts out there but it is difficult to find specialists who know how to communicate with children. Also, marketing for a child audience is not an easy task. Professor Valtaoja, however, proved to be an excellent choice. At the end of his lecture, the professor scratched his head in amazement at the children's questions such as "Do potatoes grow in space?" Afterwards, the children could sign in for a space club with six meetings. Ten children met with university lecturers, librarians and journalists to study further their own questions, to find information and to put the results into writing – to be published in *Österbotrens Tidning*.

Interesting news from the Finnish Meteorological Institute's undertakings are expected when the university continues its classes in late 2011.

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Bookstart changes family reading habits

You are never too young to enjoy a good book. This is the basic philosophy behind the Danish Bookstart programme which started in 2009. It is this simple message that children's librarians from 15 different local authorities convey when visiting families with young children in disadvantaged residential areas and handing out free books. A recent survey from the Danish Centre for Child Language shows that Bookstart has a positive effect on the reading habits of more than half the families taking part.

Danish Agency for Libraries and Media has the overall responsibility for Bookstart in 2009-2012. The programme is one of the initiatives under the Danish Government programme, Equal Opportunities and puts focus on encouraging the linguistic skills of small children.

Good spoken language, large vocabulary and the ability to understand phonetic, significant differences must be instilled while the children are quite young. Bookstart plays an important role in trying to provide the very best opportunities for learning to read, and research indicates that good spoken language and good reading skills are closely connected.

In terms of Danish as a language we need anything that will help to sharpen children's linguistic instincts and enable them to decode what older children and adults are saying. Danish is a relatively indistinct language that contains a large number of vowels. Rhymes and jingles, songs and word games can make children aware of the many nuances of the language and small, but important phonological differences. Bookstart helps

to introduce this game with language into everyday family life.

Bookstart – in brief

The librarians visit the families at home when the children are 6 and 12 months old. The families can pick up the third package at their local library, typically in connection with a narrative event or a small concert. The last package is given to the child when joining kindergarten at three years of age. All the children in the kindergarten get the same book gift. Some kindergartens arrange a big, joint three-year birthday party where the book gifts play an important role.

The children's librarians are welcomed with open arms in the homes and report about hospitable families who are very happy with the colourful bags containing books. By far the majority of the families in the disadvantaged areas are very interested in getting to know how they can use the books to strengthen their children's language and at the same time enjoy recent children's literature together.

Apart from picture books the children also get music-CDs, rhymes and jingle books and colouring books. The parents are offered supplementary lists with suggestions as to which children's books are suitable for different ages. For some families Bookstart can therefore provide the first approach to the local children's library.

Bookstart and the home-learning environment

Danish Centre for Child Language at the University of Southern Denmark carried out a survey in the spring of

2011 of the impact of Bookstart on children's home-learning environment. The main purpose has therefore been to examine whether participation in Bookstart has changed the reading habits of the families involved and if so – which factors seem to be playing the most important role in relation to the altered reading habits.

Centre for Child Language has based the survey on interviews with 41 families who all come from disadvantaged socially residential areas in the municipalities of Odense and Sønderborg. About 80 % of the participating families have a non-westerly background. The interviews with parents, who were not sufficiently familiar with the Danish language, have been conducted with the assistance of an interpreter. The interviews were centred around the families' experiences in connection with Bookstart and included questions about the parents' knowledge about and attitude to their children's aptitude for languages and which linguistically relevant activities the families engage in from day to day.

The parents also answered questions about the child's use of its mother tongue, and they gave some basic background information about the child and themselves. As the data basis of the survey is fairly limited, only descriptive analyses have been made, which cannot reveal anything about causal relations.

Even so the survey shows some important tendencies, pointing towards the possibilities inherent in Bookstart. Centre for Child Language estimates that Bookstart has great potential in a continued effort to improve children's



BOGSTART



Lisbet Vestergaard

early mastering of language. The three most important arguments in favour of the great potential of Bookstart are:

1. Bookstart is based on the idea of supporting children's language by giving them books and offering good advice about reading to the parents. Reading, and particularly dialogic reading with inclusion of the child, is among the methods which at the present time are widely recognized as having a positive effect on children's language.
2. The parents are embracing the project in a very positive way
3. 58 % of the parents say that their own reading habits have been changed by Bookstart.

One of the most thought-provoking points of the survey is that the children's librarians' explicit mediation of good advice about reading has brought great influence to bear on which families have altered their reading habits. In those families, who have changed their reading habits, 80 % answer that they have been given good advice by the Bookstart facilitator. This is twice as many as in those families who say that they have not altered their reading habits. It has to be said, though, that many of the families who have not changed their reading habits, say that they were already reading to their children regularly.

The potential is great when the children are small

On the basis of the survey Centre for Child Language provides a number of recommendations for the future work in connection with Bookstart. Since the

introduction of the programme, annual competence courses have been held for Bookstart facilitators. This effort can be intensified to great advantage. It would also be a good idea to prepare material for children's librarians, which will help to improve even further their skills in mediating knowledge about language acquisition and give the parents concrete strategies as to how they can support their children's language via reading.

Various types of material in Danish are already available to parents, which instruct them in reading dialogically with children and give them ideas as to how they can transfer strategies from these reading sessions to other situations in everyday life, for example in connection with cooking and shopping trips. As many of the families in disadvantaged residential areas do not have Danish as their first language, it would be desirable to get this material translated into several languages. In this connection it is not crucial whether the parents speak Danish or another language with their children. It is the focus on language and the way in which to use language in everyday life that is important.

In many of the local authorities where the libraries are introducing Bookstart, collaboration with other professional groups, for example health visitors and pedagogues has been established. Centre for Child Language recommends that Bookstart facilitators cultivate a more systematic collaboration with other professional groups. This in order to provide a more coherent contribution to the lives of both children and parents.

In some of the Bookstart families the parents' reading skills are impaired, for example due to dyslexia or lack of education. However, this should not prevent the parents from introducing their children to the world of books. Parents can talk to their children about the pictures in the book, make up stories themselves – or songs – and put on a narrative show with finger puppets. Centre for Child Language suggests that in many cases these parents will need role models, who can inspire them to other forms of common reading experiences with their children. Here the children's librarians might well step in and play a part. The library could also via women's groups in the disadvantaged residential areas or via family networks concentrate on the development of alternative reading role models.

Danish Agency for Libraries and Media will – together with the libraries – continue work in the future on these concrete ideas. Centre for Child Language's studies provide fuel for the development of Bookstart and for the libraries' expanding work with the language and reading of pre-school children.

If the libraries in the future will involve themselves to a greater extent in supporting children's linguistic home-learning environment, many societal advantages could be obtained. The basic philosophy will always be the same: You are never too young to enjoy a good book.

Lisbet Vestergaard
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Translated by Vibeke Cranfield

DENMARK

Cutting-edge libraries and town planning

The role of libraries in town planning and municipal development is being studied in a large research project at the Center for Cultural Policy Studies in Denmark. When cities brand themselves through art museums, music halls and mega events creating new and dynamic public spaces and hybrid arenas for culture, are libraries a part of the development? What does the new thinking demand from library architecture, interior design and branding? A central question is how libraries can become strategic factors in town development and a living part of the public domain in the future. This is studied through cases of cutting-edge libraries from Scandinavia and further abroad. The results will be published later this year.

Danmarks biblioteker 4 : 2011

Bar-code access to library collections

While browsing through the shelves in a bookstore you sometimes come across titles you would like to read but maybe not purchase for yourself. Silkeborg Public Library has come up with a solution which makes it quick and easy to check the availability of a book at the library by scanning the bar-code on your smart phone. You can proceed to make a reservation if the title is on loan or make a request for the book to be sent to your nearest library.

Perspektiv 6 / 2011

National broadcasting and public libraries serving tween users

The Danish tween program Ramasjang is broadcast every day at 6 pm on national television. Since March 2011, the Ramasjang Live cast has been driving in a bus across the country, recording the show at libraries. The project aims at marketing and presenting the services of both physical children's libraries and the pallesgavebod.dk (presented in SPLQ 1 : 2010) web site to chil-

dren between 8 and 12 through different kinds of themed activities such as a 'Pimp your bike' competition in May.

Bibliotek og medier 2:2011

Everyday life in pictures

The Royal Library of Denmark has published a collection of photographs by Sven Türc on Flickr using the Commons platform which gives access to public photo collections. The day after the pictures illustrating everyday life in the 1930s and 1940s were made available more than 1,300 users had taken a look at the most popular picture, 'Cycling on Strøget'. "Truly a beautiful set" and "What a perfect picture of nostalgia" are among comments from grateful users on Flickr Commons. A collection of portraits by female Danish artists is also available.

<http://perspektiv.bf.dk/Nyheder>

FINLAND

Börje, the reading dog in a blog near you

Reading education assistance dogs who listen to uncertain child readers reading books in libraries have spread from the US to Scandinavia. The first library in Finland to introduce the service was Kaarina Public Library in Western Finland. The first dog to have its own blog was Börje from Espoo. Börje is a Maltese who blogs about events in his life, the children he meets at the library, books and reading. As he was born in Beverly Hills, he has asked the children to write using simple sentences in easy-to-understand Finnish.

<http://lukukoira.blogspot.com/>

Mapping the library

Now it is easier for library users to locate travel guides or talking books by using an electronic shelving map of the adult section at the main library in Oulu. Apart from larger topics such as 'travel' you can search material by key words or classification numbers. The map is the first of its kind in Finland

and includes 1,100 different key words. It is the result of cooperation between Oulu City Library, the city IT department and a graphic design studio.

www.kirjastot.fi

Dreaming and reading

Turku, the Cultural Capital of Europe 2011, has been working together with several partners to organise a series of literary events which expanded from local into national during the darkest time of the year between August and December. How do light and shadow impact the space and meaning of reading? Is there a lighter side to dark melancholy? The theme of dreams, insomnia and premonitions was studied from different angles in Book-Crossing, book circles, writing workshops and discussions. The In the Light of the Reading Lamp campaign brought elderly readers to the library to meet and discuss with authors and organised book talks at children's hospital wards and at homes for the elderly. The Reading Lamp was part of the 876 Shades of Darkness program in the city.

www.turku2011.fi/lukulampun-valossa

NORWAY

Key to the library

Visiting the local library has never been this easy! All the 1,200 inhabitants over 15 of Dyrøy in Troms are entitled to a key to the library. One of the six test users of the service told that he visited the library twice a week to study. "It is a great place for focusing on school work." All users have to sign a contract to get a key card which registers your visits. The library may be accessed seven days a week during day time.

Bibliotekforum 1 : 2011

Ask a politician

The Buskerud department of the Norwegian Library Association sent out a short questionnaire on libraries to

candidates in the municipal elections. In addition to getting information on how the political parties see the role of the public libraries, the aim was to make the candidates aware of the different functions of the library in the community. The candidates were asked what they thought were the most important functions of the library, what service form they would prioritise, when they had last visited the local library, what experiences they had of their local library, and whether their own party mentioned the development of library services in the party program. After the tragic events in Norway in July, the function of libraries in supporting democracy seems more important than ever. As one of the respondents put it: "The library is an important democratising arena in Norway". The same goes for any country.

<https://docs.google.com>

Pop quiz with a literary twist

Choosing the favourite book of the whole city in Bergen is a long and fun process where library users and literature buffs get to meet in the library but also in other popular locations. One of the literary events builds on the popular radio program Popquiz. The quizzes are held in pubs and bars with a mixture of pop and literature related questions starting from the 60s, with topics from a new decade during every round. The library organises the quiz evenings with the support of the pubs, a local tele operator, local book stores and shopping centres, an ICT company, AFF, the leadership development

research fund at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, the Freedom of Expression Foundation and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority.

<http://bergenbibliotek.no>

SWEDEN

TenThirteen – a library for tweens

On the second floor of the Kulturhuset cultural center in Stockholm you can not only borrow books but also cook, make films and radio programs, create music, sew or just chill out, especially if you are between ten and thirteen years old. The activities are not planned out to a tee (or should you say 'twee') but can be developed together with the users. During the mornings the library receives school classes. The afternoons are open to all tweens. The library focuses on four areas: Digital media, Body and Soul, School & Literature and Film & Music. The partners include several publishing houses and the national broadcasting company SVT also records some of its programmes on the library premises.

Biblioteksbladet 4 : 2011

Modern staff and uninformed users?

While library workers see good contact with users as the most important factor in library service, users themselves value the expertise of library staff the most. Top factors for all users, frequent or not, include suitable opening hours, easily accessible library building and (book) collections. From the non-user viewpoint the order of the factors is

more or less same, but there are less factors they consider very important. These are part of the results in a recent study made by the Swedish Library Association earlier this year. The report takes up the conceptions of library professionals, library users and non-users, compares them with each other and with the reality of library services. Library staff tend to value IT and e.g. the library web site more than the users; library customers appreciate books over music, film and computer games. While 90 % of the staff believe that users feel welcome at the library, a little under 60 per cent of the users feel the same way.

Biblioteksbladet 4 : 2011

Observing and observant colleagues

As part of a larger training program on meeting the customer, staff from Stockholm Public Library and the library at Karolinska Institutet, a medical university, took part in a discussion group on feedback. One of the methods used was collegial observation where eight pairs of staff observed each other during three shifts at the desk. Afterwards, they gave one another both positive and negative feedback. The tasks and the user expectations are quite different at the two libraries: public library users expect more interaction and personal service from the staff while medical library users are usually happy to get help with the question in hand.

Biblioteksbladet 5 : 2011

Keep up with developments in the Nordic public libraries in Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly

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