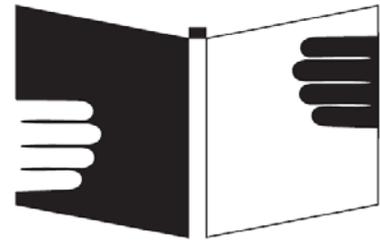


Immigrant-institutet



LIBRARIES ■ FOR ■ ALL

REGIONAL REPORT

The pilot project Libraries for All – ESME at Biskopsgården Library in Gothenburg, Sweden



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Table of contents

1. Starting point of the project "Libraries for All" at Biskopsgården Library	3
2. Selection of the Swedish pilot library.....	3
3. Setting up the Advisory Board for Multiculturalism	4
4. Needs Assessment.....	5
5. The work of the Advisory Board for Multiculturalism.....	5
6. Services and activities at Biskopsgården "Library for All"	6
Permanent services and activities at Biskopsgården Library:	6
New activities and events in Libraries for All 2009-2010	
Enhanced media collection – new purchases in Libraries for All.....	7
Improved information	8
Inviting trainees with immigrant background	8
7. Local experience.....	8
8. Evaluation	10
Promoting the library as a forum for language learning	10
Language cafés.....	10
Story telling for children	11
Homework support.....	12
Bridging the digital gap	13
Computer courses for women	13
Computer courses in other languages.....	13
Promoting the library as an intercultural meeting place for all.....	14
Activities for children and teenagers during school holidays	14
Children's theater	14
Author visits.....	14
World film evenings.....	14
Handicraft.....	15
9. Publicity and transfer of knowledge	15
Cooperation with intercultural competence development projects and networks	15
Conclusions and plans ahead.....	17

1. Starting point of the project “Libraries for All” at Biskopsgården Library

Biskopsgården Library is one of 25 public libraries in Gothenburg. It is situated in the city district Biskopsgården, a traditional working class area rich in linguistic and cultural diversity, where half of the 25,500 residents have an international background. The library is an important local arena, aiming at meeting the needs of young and adults in the catchment area. The library plays a central role as meeting place and lifelong learning center in the city district. The library staff is used to meeting people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in their daily work and they have an excellent reputation in the area. Two of the nine staff members are immigrants, including the head of library, who came to Sweden as a refugee in the early 90s. The library cooperates with local preschools, compulsory schools, adult education organizations as well as other institutions and NGOs in the catchment area. There is a wealth of cultural and linguistic resources in the area, and many residents appreciate the international mixture in the area. However, there are also issues that call for solutions, above all, problems related to unemployment among youth and immigrants, and housing shortage.

2. Selection of the Swedish pilot library

Biskopsgården Library was selected the Swedish pilot library in spring 2009 because of the interesting demographic composition in the area, the large number of library visitors with immigrant background, and the keen interest in the project showed by the library and the city district administration. The project goals of developing multilingual and multicultural library services are fully in line with Biskopsgården Library’s policy and aims, and the library staff has long experience of offering library services to local residents of both majority and minority background. The library welcomed the idea of setting up an advisory board for multiculturalism with local residents to promote already existing services as well as new library services, activities and events targeting both immigrants and Swedes.

Biskopsgården Library – Summary of facts:

- 25,500 residents in the catchment area
- 62% of the residents born in Sweden, 38% born outside Sweden
- 10% of the residents were born in Sweden with both parents born outside Sweden
- Approximately 70 nationalities are found in the catchment area
- Largest languages: Swedish, Finnish, Turkish, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Farsi, Arabic, Kurdish and Somali
- Library visitors per year: 162,000 in 2008 and 185,000 in 2009
- Media loans per year: 93,000 in 2008 and 98,000 in 2009
- Staff: 7.75 full time positions, divided on 6 librarians and 3 assistants
- 2 staff members are immigrants
- Languages spoken by the library staff: Swedish, English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Farsi
- Open: Monday-Saturday, 48 hours per week (34 hours in summer, Saturday closed)

3. Setting up the Advisory Board for Multiculturalism

The library invited eight local residents, three librarians and the local project coordinator from the Immigrant Institute to the advisory board for multiculturalism. All invited local residents are active library users. They belong to the largest language groups in the district and all live and/or work in Biskopsgården. Their professional and educational background is mainly in the field of education, from preschool to adult education, and some have experience of business ownership and blue-collar work. Several members are actively involved in immigrant organisations, community radio and other NGOs and have access to useful networks for reaching new target groups. The gender distribution of the advisory board is balanced and the age span of its members ranges from 20 to 70 years of age. The main motivation for all involved is to contribute to local society and the remuneration to the advisory board members consists only of honorary gifts.



The advisory board had eight meetings June 2009 through September 2010 to assess local needs, discuss, plan and promote intercultural library offers and activities at Biskopsgården library and serve as links between the library and the local community. It has been an intense and rewarding cooperation the advisory board members have decided to continue the cooperation after the project end.

4. Needs Assessment

The local needs assessment was initiated in spring 2009. At the advisory board meetings, the librarians' experience from their daily work was discussed and paired with the local residents' experience and knowledge of the target groups. Interviews with library staff, library visitors and local stakeholders were made. We also studied previous library studies and reports, local needs assessment reports made by three resident groups in Biskopsgården, and local demographic statistics. We also carried out a survey in which 100 residents in Biskopsgården stated their use of the library services and wishes for further improvement (50 with Swedish background and 50 with non-Swedish background). The survey showed that the library and its services are much appreciated by the visitors and that the library plays an important role as meeting place and information center, which is also reflected in the high number of library visitors. The borrowing service of books, films, music, newspapers and journals in multiple languages is well used. Priority areas emerging from the needs assessment are related to enhancing the role of the library as an intercultural meeting place and forum for lifelong learning, improvement of the physical environment and reaching the target groups:

Assessed priorities

- Promoting the library as a forum for language learning
- Bridging the digital gap
- Promoting the library as an intercultural meeting place offering cultural activities for children, teenagers, adults, and families
- Improving the library environment (display, signs, and "cosiness")
- Improving information and marketing

5. The work of the Advisory Board for Multiculturalism

The prioritized areas were discussed at the advisory board meetings and resulted in a multitude of ideas for improvement. In autumn 2009 and spring 2010 many new activities and events were planned and carried out with the assistance of the advisory board members. They also contributed with their networks for marketing both permanent and new library services and events, and functioned as local ambassadors for the library, as links to the local community. Some of the members also contributed with valuable translation work of information materials into their mother tongues.

6. Services and activities at Biskopsgården “Library for All”

The advisory board cooperation resulted in opening up the library to a wide range of new activities and events. Media in several languages were purchased, information materials were developed in multiple languages and new library signs were ordered and recently installed. Below follows a list of both permanent services and new services tried out during the project lifetime. Some are described in more detail in Section 8: Evaluation. For more details we refer the reader to the Swedish regional project report available on the project website.

Permanent services and activities at Biskopsgården Library:

- All services except fax, print and copy are free of charge to library visitors
- Media in 23 languages. Journals and newspapers in ten languages available in the library cafeteria
- Home delivery service for elderly and disabled persons
- Guided library tours on demand
- Adult learning environment (see also Section 9)
- 18 computers + one for catalogue use
- Scanners, printers, fax and copy machines
- Weekly basic computer courses
- Home work support (3 times a week)
- Weekly Swedish Language café - Swedish conversational group
- Counselling (on demand)
- Storytelling for children in Swedish (15 per year) and children’s theater (16-24 per year)
- Monthly Art exhibitions in the Library Art Corner
- Handicraft Day – exhibition and sale of locally made handicraft (1 per year)
- Literature presentation evenings (approx. 10 per year) and a monthly reading club
- Author visits (number depending on budget)
- Monthly meeting with local politicians
- Suggestion boxes – one for the library, one for the city district committee

New activities and events in Libraries for All 2009-2010 – free of charge to library visitors:

- Drop-in English conversational group for language learners (weekly July 2009-September 2010)
- Drop-in Kurdish conversational group for language learners (weekly July 2009-March 2010)
- Drop-in Knitting café (weekly February 2010) and Display Your Best Knitting (an exhibition two weeks in April 2010)
- Computer courses for women (November 2009-February 2010)
- Computer courses in English, Persian and Turkish (February 2010)
- Bilingual story telling/dramatization together with preschools (March-May 2010)
- Children's theater on Saturdays (twice)
- Family Saturday with workshops and cultural performances (17 April 2010)
- Youth film club (since November 2009)
- Workshops for youth during school holidays (drawing, animation, beading, origami etc. since October 2009)
- Author evenings with authors with migratory experience (5; September 2009-April 2010)
- World Film evenings (monthly February – 2010-May 2010)
- Lectures on various topics: India, How to start your own company, Food & Exercise, Language and Identity
- Fire safety information evenings (twice)
- Library quizzes – learn more about the library – win a book! (at special events)

Enhanced media collection – new purchases in Libraries for All (N=366)

- Swedish language courses and grammars in six languages
- Dictionaries in fifteen languages, including reference copies
- Easy Readers in Swedish combined with CDs
- Everyday handbooks in fifteen languages, including child rearing, health, cookery, driver's license theory
- Fiction for adults and children in fifteen languages

Improved information



- New library sign system, with signs in original language for media in other languages than Swedish
- Improved display
- Translation of relevant materials (e.g. library programs, scanner instructions)
- Increased outreach activities: Visits to local associations, preschools, schools, youth camps, barbershops, participation at the monthly Public Health Breakfast meetings open to local employees and residents, participation at the city district festivals Biskopsgården Open Air Day for local associations, Biskopsgården International Winter Market, Handicraft Day
- Inviting journalists to special events
- Using community radio, web calendars, e-mail lists, posters, handouts etc.

Inviting trainees with immigrant background

The library has also offered the possibility for several trainees and international students to contribute to the library development. Several young residents, librarian students and international master's students of intercultural communication have thus contributed with their knowledge, skills, and networks, and also served as positive role models for young library visitors.

7. Local experience

The advisory board cooperation has been valuable for both library and residents. For the library, the advisory board has offered a valuable forum for communication with local residents offering feedback and suggestions for further development of the library and its services. The residents have contributed with their experience, language and cultural

knowledge and skills, and many of the suggestions put forward have been implemented, while others are in the process of being implemented.

The openness and active involvement of the library staff and management have been prerequisites for promoting the multicultural and multilingual library together with local residents. The welcoming attitude of the library staff combined with their willingness to listen, discuss and put new ideas into practice have been key success factors. The twelve advisory board members interviewed would like to continue the advisory board cooperation, although, four meetings per semester were considered a little too frequent.

Several of the library services have started as experiments, the library offering interested local associations and institutions the opportunity to run activities at the library for some time, followed by a joint evaluation and decision on whether to continue or not. Several of the services have thus become standing offers, like the homework support in cooperation with volunteers from the Red Cross Youth Section and Medborgarskolan, the Swedish language café in cooperation with the Swedish church, the fire safety information evenings together with the regional rescue service and the world film evenings in cooperation with nine organisations. Since September 2010 the English language café is also continued in cooperation with local residents and a knitting café is now also offered weekly by the NGO Friluftsförbundet.

Since the project introduction in May 2009, the number of public activities more than doubled compared to the previous year. In February 2010, 60 open activities took place at the library, compared to 23 the previous year. Some of the activities were planned and scheduled well in advance, while other activities were organised on short notice. For the library visitors the wide range of activities and services offered was very positive. "There is so much going on at the library now!" was common feedback brought to the advisory board meetings. The positive feedback was, of course, rewarding for the library staff, however, during the most intense period in spring 2010 it was difficult to keep all staff members updated. The activities and events have attracted many visitors. The author visits were attended by more than 300 visitors, the bilingual story telling series by 260 children and 70 adults, 400 persons attended the Family Saturday (compared to 200 on a regular Saturday), 60 persons participated at the world film evenings etc. Compared to 2008 there has been a 14% increase in the number of library visitors at Biskopsgården Library (N=185,000) and 5% increase in media loans (N= 98,000). 1 245 new library cards have been issued at

Biskopsgården Library 1 June 2009 through 30 September 2010, and the adult educational environment Adults in Learning received 204 new members.

8. Evaluation

The services and activities organised have been positively received following the evaluations carried out:

Promoting the library as a forum for language learning

Language cafés

The library has offered weekly informal drop-in conversational groups free of charge in the library cafeteria in three different languages. The Swedish language café has run continuously for a long time and English conversational training started to run weekly in July 2009. The Kurdish language café was ran weekly for nine months. The language cafés offer a good supplement to formal language training. The format is quite simple and the setting is informal. The topics discussed depend on the interests of the trainers and participants. The Swedish language café provides newcomers with an opportunity to practice the new language in a relaxed surrounding over a cup of coffee or tea for an hour and a half once a week (English and Kurdish 1 hour, but often prolonged). Swedes are also welcome, but seldom attend, apart from the language trainers.

The evaluations carried out with 20 language café participants (9 Swedish Language Café, 8 English, and 3 Kurdish) show that they appreciate the language cafés. The participants in all three language cafés state two main reasons for attending: to practice the new language and to socialize and make new friends. This is also the perception of the language trainers, who also observe that the participants seek to know more about different aspects of the new society and daily life, by asking about various topics, from Swedish health care, to parental meetings at school, or personal holiday plans.

The Swedish language café is organized by the study librarian in cooperation with the deacon from the adjacent Swedish church and attracts on average ten participants per week. The participants are very motivated and eager to learn the new language. Whereas the Swedish language café mainly attracts newcomers, the English language café is held by one trainer and attended by in average five participants per week, sometimes newcomers who know English quite well but not yet Swedish, and by residents who are proficient in Swedish

and would like to improve their English, either for higher studies or travelling purposes. The Kurdish language café attracted mainly three persons who were interested in learning Kurdish in order to interact with Kurdish friends or relatives.

Special programs have been made together with the language cafés. The most appreciated events were the fire safety evenings organised together with the regional rescue service. "Very instructive and useful" was the unanimous reaction of the participants. "The fire safety information evenings will become a standing offer every semester", says the study librarian.

The Swedish language café participants mainly express two wishes for improvement: that the language café run twice a week instead once a week, and that more Swedes attend. The latter could be solved by inviting more special guests.

Story telling for children

The children's librarian organises storytelling in Swedish approximately 15 times per year. These are popular events open to all children aged 3 to 5 years. As a supplement, we carried out a series of seven bilingual storytelling and dramatizations of the Norwegian folk tale "Billy Goat Gruff" in eight languages in spring 2010 in cooperation with pedagogues and children from local preschools and NGOs. The cooperation was suggested by the Kurdish advisory board member, who is a preschool teacher in Biskopsgården, where a local language project has been initiated to actively promote the children's bilingual development. Staff from two local preschools, the Immigrant Institute and local residents volunteered as storytellers. Preschool children were engaged as actors, performing the story dressed as the goats and the troll. All city district preschools, childminders and parents were invited to attend the bilingual storytelling events with their children aged 3-5 years.

The main idea was to take advantage of the multicultural pedagogues' language skills, to display some of the rich language resources available in the local area, to support children's bilingual development and offer them an opportunity to meet other children who speak the same mother tongue. After the bilingual dramatizations adults and children were invited to the library children's section, to enjoy the children's literature in multiple languages and pedagogical materials exhibited on the preschool language project.

In all, 263 children and 69 adults attended the events. The 21 respondents to the web evaluation sent to the invited preschools found the bilingual storytelling very good (13) and

good (8). All consider bilingual storytelling a good idea in general. All would like to attend more bilingual storytelling events with the children in the future and 10 respondents volunteered as future storytellers in eight languages. The respondents' answers indicate that the children appreciated the storytelling and felt happy and proud when hearing the story in their mother tongue. Several respondents point out that hearing the story in their mother tongue is beneficial for the first language development and also enables the children to better understand the story in the second language. One of the Swedish preschool teachers believes that the opportunity for children to hear both Swedish and their own/another language will stimulate their interest in languages in general and in each other languages in particular. She also points out the importance of preschools taking active part in society, using the library as an intercultural meeting place. "By organizing the storytelling series we show that it does not have to cost much nor be so professional in order for children to become involved. We hope to inspire children and pedagogues in Biskopsgården to work with language, drama and creativity" (our translation).

Homework support

Since two years Biskopsgården Library cooperates with the Red Cross Youth Section and Medborgarskolan to offer free homework support for children, youth and adults in the city district. There is a large demand of homework assistance, especially among children with immigrant background. Homework help is offered 5.30-7.00 p.m three days a week: on Mondays and Wednesdays by the Red Cross Youth Section and on Tuesdays by Medborgarskolan. Often ten to fifteen participants show up, above all 10 to 13 year-olds, mostly girls. They use the study room at the library, and sometimes the Art Corner and other premises depending on the number of participants. Ten active volunteers from the Red Cross take turns to staff the homework support on Mondays and Wednesdays. A minimum of two volunteers are needed on each occasion. Several of the volunteers are university students and some work. On Tuesdays a teacher in mathematics from Medborgarskolan helps out with math problems. The subjects requested most are mathematics, Swedish and English, followed by history and civics. The homework support service corresponds to an important need and is appreciated by both participants and volunteers.

Bridging the digital gap

Computer courses for women

November 2009 through February 2010 the study librarian AnnaCarin Elf at Biskopsgården Library offered computer courses for women aiming at bridging the digital gap. Today we need a computer and computer skills in order to apply for a job, find an apartment, look for travel offers etc. Since the learning environment at Biskopsgården Library is mainly used by men, and, as the advisory board pointed out, "it may be difficult for women to just enter and take a seat when there are so many men there". By organizing a course for women only the study librarian hoped to make it easier for women to "make the room their own". On the other hand, library studies show that men and women use the library in different ways – women are more goal oriented and leave the premises once they have carried out what they came for, while men use the library more as a living room.

The computer course for women was positively evaluated. Ten of the twelve participants had resided in Sweden more than 20 years, and most were more than 50 years old. Their mother tongues were Swedish, Slovenian, Spanish, Tigrinya and Kurdish. Given their length of residence in Sweden, language problems were not an issue. The evaluation results show that the participants who attended the full course learned a lot and have used the course well. All were satisfied with the course contents (ten sessions including mouse and keyboard, Word processing, how to save and print documents, search information on the Internet, order tickets and e-mail), and they also appreciated the teaching and involvement of the study librarian in charge of the course. Five participants considered important that the course targeted women only, whereas it was irrelevant to the other seven participants. However, it was important to all that the course was free of charge. The evaluator Zeliha Tuna points out that this is quite reasonable given that several of the participants are senior citizens or low-income earners. She also highlights both the great need of and interest in basic computer courses at the library to bridge the digital gap.

Computer courses in other languages

In spring 2010 computer courses in English, Persian and Turkish were offered at the library for six weeks by three master's student trainees. Despite our marketing efforts, only one Turkish speaking participant signed up the last day of the course. Either our marketing efforts were insufficient, or the need of computer courses in other languages than the majority language is low. Following discussions with librarians, the latter seems to be the

experience of other libraries in Gothenburg, part from a higher interest in computer courses in Arabic.

Promoting the library as an intercultural meeting place for all

Activities for children and teenagers during school holidays

Several appreciated activities during school holidays have been offered at the library: three days drawing course in October 2009, two days manga drawing course in February 2010 and two days animation course in April 2010. The activities have been positively evaluated and will continue. The Library Youth Film Club kicked-off in autumn 2009 will also continue to show popular movies during school holidays.

Children's theater

Biskopsgården Library regularly organises popular children's theater performances. Most take place on weekdays and are attended by local preschools. In the project framework the library has also offered theater sessions on weekends, something which has been very much appreciated by attending parents. In April 2010, the library organised a Family Saturday – a day filled with children's theater, creative workshops for children, world music, and dance shows for the whole family.

Author visits

The library has also organised a series of author evenings, inviting novelists who are famous in Sweden, like Theodor Kallifatides, Zack O'Yeah, Renzo Aneröd, Douglas Foley and Susanna Alakoski. Most of the authors have immigrant background and all write on intercultural topics. The author visits have been very positively received by the library visitors. Meeting with Douglas Foley was very inspiring to many of the one hundred teenagers in Biskopsgården who attended the event. He is one of very few youth novelists in Sweden whose main characters are immigrant teenagers in Swedish suburbs.

World film evenings

The world film evenings have also been appreciated and will continue. The four films have all been very different: The Iranian semi-documentary "Offside", the Swedish Arabic semi-documentary "Some for my heart, some for my God", the Russian feature film "Moscow does not believe in tears" and the Thai feature film "The legend of Suriyothai". The visitors were invited to stay for discussions after the film, using a special methodology called Talk Film –

Talk Life developed by the Swedish church and adult educational organisation Sensus. All participants stated that they would like to come back to watch more world films in the future.

Handicraft

Handicraft is popular all over the world and the yearly Handicraft Day organised at the library and adjacent People's House in November offers ample opportunities to meet across cultures. The day is organised in cooperation with the city district culture group, local associations and artisans, professionals as well as amateurs. In February 2010, several weekly knitting cafés were also organised in the library cafeteria by one of the trainees and in March 2010, local residents' favorite knitting were on display in the Art Corner while local expert knitters from the local association Friluftsförbundet in Biskopsgården offered knitting lessons to library visitors. To the staff's delight, previous problems with rowdy youngsters at the library vanished completely during these two weeks. The young teenagers appreciated very much the company of the multicultural group of ladies knitting in the Art Corner.

9. Publicity and transfer of knowledge

Cooperation with intercultural competence development projects and networks

The staff at Biskopsgården Library has disseminated the project outcomes together with the Immigrant Institute via several regional library sister projects and networks. One important channel of information is the European Social Fund project "The Interlingual Library – opening up intercultural meeting places" (2009-2011)⁶ offering in-service courses for intercultural competence development for library staff and library managers. The project is headed by Västra Götaland Regional Library Office and comprises more than thirty public libraries in Western Sweden, several NGOs, cultural and educational organisations and institutions.

Another valuable project for transfer of knowledge and good learning examples is the European Grundtvig partnership project Creative Approaches to Intercultural Competence (CAIC), the adult learning environment cooperation Adults in Learning (Vuxna i Lärande) (see Summary of facts below) the Gothenburg multilingual library network and not least the IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations.

The adult educational project Adults in Learning (Vuxna i Lärande) comprises 8 libraries in Gothenburg

At each library, the project offers adult learners a learning environment with a number of computers, basic computer courses, home work support, counselling, Swedish Language Café, and language learning media. The study librarian at the respective libraries offers the services approximately 10 hours per week and also focus on outreach work to adult educational organisations, above all Swedish for immigrants. The project organises ten study librarian meetings per year and also two Study Forum workshops per semester to which all library staff in western Sweden is invited. Examples of workshop topics are "Cooperation", "Diversity" and "Bridging the digital gap".

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Seminars and workshops

In October 2009 we organised an intercultural breakfast meeting at the library for intercultural professionals, where we presented the current projects mentioned above and held a workshop for library staff on the theme "Users' perspective" focussing on immigrants' needs of media, library organisation, display, signs and information useful for immigrants. The workshop included a walk-through of Biskopsgården Library and entailed valuable feedback with suggestions for improvement of signs and information to immigrants, also highlighted as a need in the local needs assessment. A follow-up workshop was organized in September 2010 when colleagues from other libraries in the Gothenburg area were invited to discuss purchase of media in other languages than Swedish and could discover the new sign system installed at the library. The signs in original script for literature in other languages than Swedish were particularly appreciated (see pictures on page 8).

On 21 April 2010 we organised a seminar-workshop at the Immigrant Institute together with the Interlingual Library expert course. It included a presentation of the activities, library, archive and exhibitions of the Immigrant Institute. One of the members of the advisory board for multiculturalism at Biskopsgården Library presented the community radio as a means of marketing library services to immigrants. Project updates, presentation of a Swedish web forum for library staff¹ and plans for the future were also discussed.

In the course of the project we have participated in several transnational meetings with our ESME project partners in Frankfurt, Prague, and Hohenems. We have also taken part in several international conferences and study visits, in Borås, Rotterdam, Gothenburg and Copenhagen. On 27 November 2009 we presented the library as an intercultural meeting

¹ <http://mangsprak.ning.com>

place and forum for lifelong learning together with our project trainees at the Nordic Conference on Intercultural Communication (NIC 2009 in Borås²).

At IFLA 2010 in Gothenburg we presented our poster as well as the paper "Reading - What to purchase and why?" together with the Interlingual Library project. The paper is based on Ann-Christine Brunnström's study on immigrants' views on library services in Gothenburg and how to cater for immigrants' needs of media, and it also includes good practice examples from Libraries for All. We also presented the project at the IFLA Study Visit in Rotterdam in 2009 and the IFLA Satellite Meeting in Copenhagen 2010 organized by the IFLA Section Library Services to Multicultural Populations. We also held a seminar at the International Square at Gothenburg Book Fair 2010 in cooperation with library staff and local residents from Biskopsgården. This we will repeat at the Inspiration Day organized by the Regional Library Office in Western Sweden on 15 November 2010.



Conclusions and plans ahead

The project "Libraries for All – ESME" has focussed on immigrants' needs and promoting the library as an intercultural meeting place and forum for lifelong learning. A large number of new services and events have therefore been offered at Biskopsgården Library during the project cooperation and several of them have become permanent offers.

By opening the library for cooperation with local residents, local organisations and trainees, many have been included in the library work and have contributed to reaching new target groups. Since the cooperation with local residents in the library advisory board has been successful it will continue after the project end. Biskopsgården Library is not the only library in Gothenburg with a local advisory board cooperation. At Hjällbo Library, situated in the

² <http://nic.hb.se/>

north-eastern part of Gothenburg where 90% of the inhabitants are immigrants, an advisory board work actively since many years. The wish-list of Biskopsgården advisory board includes a visit to this group and also to other libraries and institutions for inspiration. Our hope is to inspire more public libraries to create advisory boards for multiculturalism and develop the library in cooperation with residents.

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Gothenburg, 30 September 2010

For more information on the Swedish local project, please contact

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See also the Interlingual Library project Swedish web forum: <http://mangsprak.ning.com>