



BROKERING MIGRANTS' CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Report on the Learning Partnerships in Sweden

1. Pre-work

Different types of Learning Partnerships (LPs) were designed by the European partnership and described in the projects logframe. In order to meet the Swedish reality, the Swedish project team – consisting of Ida Burén, CEO at Intercult, and Bella Lawson, Officer of Cultural Affairs at the Regional Council Region Västerbotten – that planned and organised all the LPs, decided to update the content in the learning partnerships. We formed a Swedish reference group that consisted of the project team and experts on diversity from Intercult and Region Västerbotten's network; Rani Kasapi – Head of Culture in Botkyrka Municipality, Lena Grönlund – librarian and Raymond Peroti – rapper, activist and youth worker.

The reference group met twice during the spring of 2014 and helped the project team to adapt and develop the content of the LPs in order to secure relevance and quality.

As part of the pre-work, the project team also took part in different learning actions, such as seminars about diversity, meetings with other external experts and reading research, articles and literature.

One crucial discussion that was held in the reference group was about the differences between the target group "migrants" and the common used term "Swedish with a migrant background". We were certain that we had to address the latter target group as well, but understood that we couldn't use the same wording. The fight for an intercultural society will not be successful if we chain people to their migrant background, instead, we need to develop and upgrade the idea of swedishness. Therefore we decided to broaden the target group and use the word "diversity" rather than "migrants".

Another outcome of the reference group was a change in content of one of the LPs. We removed the LP with focus on "cultural institutions with schools of high migrant intake" and instead added a LP with focus on human rights and culture. The reason was that we engaged rather large institutions with different departments for children and youth activities than those we had engaged through the interview. In order to secure the quality of the LPs and the knowledge exchange within the group we wanted as much as possible to have the same people attending all LPs.

The target group and the participants of the learning partnerships were representatives from the cultural institutions (CIs) that were interviewed and thus part of the project.

Following cultural institutions participated in the learning partnerships:

- The museum Malmö museer
- The museum Bohusläns museum
- The museum Västerbottens museum
- The theatre Riksteatern
- The theatre Västerbottensteatern
- The Culture House City Theatre Kulturhuset Stadsteatern
- The opera Folkoperan
- The concert house Vara Konserthus
- The county library Länsbiblioteket
- The library Finspångs bibliotek
- The culture and arts school Botkyrka Kulturskola

2. Learning Partnership 1 (18–19 September)

A two-day workshop on recruitment and employment was organised. The first day focused on recruitment of new audiences and staff and was led by Ida Östensson, chairperson and founder of the foundation Crossing Borders that works towards an equal and inclusive society, and by Madeleine Lundin, project manager at Interfem, a feminist and antiracist platform. The second day, lead by Madeleine Lundin, focused solely on staff recruitment, more specifically on competence based recruitment without discrimination, a method that has been developed by Interfem.

Two representatives from AF Kultur och Media (the Swedish Unemployment Agency) Ulf Johansson and Erik Bevin, participated during the full LP and ended the day with a presentation of the agency and its mission followed by reflections and discussions about needs for networking, coaching and how to decrease obstacles such as languages, how to value professional skills, validation of diplomas etc.



The LP was situated in the city of Skellefteå and gathered twelve participants from nine different Cultural institutions, two recruiters from AF Kultur och Media, two documentary filmmakers and three from the project group, all together twenty people.

As the national report shows, recruitment is one of the weakest areas of the CIs. Nine out of 11 institutions reach the basic level and two reach the lower intermediate level in our benchmark test.

The staffs in the different organisations do not reflect the population structure and very few people with migrant background are employed. That is why we decided to focus the first LP on this issue. The CIs expected to learn more about how to change their recruitment processes with adequate, effective and concrete tools.

The workshop with Madeleine Lundin from Interfem was a very practical introduction to their method competence based recruitment without discrimination. Interfem has developed this method and published a manual, "Rekrytera rätt", that served as the basis for the workshop.

The concrete methodology led to productive discussions and insights, and the project team received very positive feedback from the participants afterwards. One successful example is that of the operahouse Folkoperan that used Interfem's method to recruit an economist. Pia Kronqvist CeO at the operahouse Folkoperan stated that it was her best recruitment ever.

Our conclusion is that all new recruitments need to have a clear diversity target. There is very little recruitment in the cultural sector therefore each opportunity needs to be regarded with special attention and affirmative action. Diversity and intercultural competence need to be the leading perspectives. We therefore strongly recommend competence based recruitment processes.

The Swedish cultural sector is known for recruiting based on relations and networks rather than competence. This doesn't really make sense, since artists and artistic work are in most cases recruited and chosen based on auditions and showings. Therefore, our sector ought to be well prepared to recruit other positions with this method as well.

There is a need for competence development about diversity and intercultural competence for the already existing staff. The cultural sector is not protected from assumptions and prejudice. The management should be prepared to make room for changes, which might lead to internal discussions and conflicts when it comes to how power is organised within the institution. But measures for quality need to be upgraded and skills revised. Habits and hierarchies must be questioned. The development in intercultural competence and diversity should be regarded as part of the overall organisational development. How to stay relevant and meet the future is crucial.

3. Learning Partnership 2 (16–17 October)

A two-day workshop with cultural institutions and established migrant cultural professionals with the aim to increase knowledge was organised. The first day, PhD candidate in Educational Sociology Hassan Sharif from Uppsala University, held a seminar on Swedish migration history. The second day, democracy agent and consultant Barakat Ghebrehawariat, lectured on how cultural institutions can work for inclusion.



The LP was situated in the city of Stockholm and gathered fifteen participants from nine different CIs, two documentary filmmakers and three from the project group, all together twenty people.

According to the results of the interviews with the CIs, the outreach work is in general not strategic when it comes to involving migrant communities. They have in general very little knowledge about the migrant communities in their mission area. Each cultural institution could develop a much more strategic approach to this work by collecting data and

mapping the migrant communities in their mission area in order to picture their potential audiences and participants.

The participants pre-understanding and pre-knowledge varied a lot. Our learning partnership intersects into an on-going discussion and learning process that engages a variety of players in Sweden today. We experience a real boost when it comes to discussing diversity, social inclusion and integration in Sweden at the moment. The spring's EU election and our Swedish local, regional and national elections in September have given ground to a dynamic climate with intense discussions, actions and political moves from a series of players, from the civic society as well as from the political parties. Specifically, a new generation of young voices with own experiences from migration has been influential and has taken an active part in public discussions, as a sort of a "diversity controller". More and more information and research on these issues produced and spread. Therefore, the environment is set for a higher degree of knowledge. The CIs need to do their homework; there are no more excuses. Democracy agent and consultant Barakat Ghebrehawariat lectured about this subject, especially stressing how the CIs marketing and communication need to be upgraded and relevant in its wordings, in order to be inclusive.

A conclusion on an individual level is that we all need to reflect on our role as gatekeepers and include norm critical and postcolonial perspectives on our actions and positions.

The participants all agreed on how important it is to emphasise diversity and inclusion for all inhabitants in Sweden as a highly prioritised goal for publicly funded cultural institutions. We sensed an urge to defend the democratic vision of publicly funded culture for all inhabitants in Sweden.

4. Learning Partnership 3 (13–15 November)

The Swedish Forum for Human Rights (MR-dagarna) was held in November 13-15, 2014 in Umeå. All the participants were invited to attend the largest event on human rights in Europe, that this year was part of Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014. 2014 theme focused on human rights and culture. The participants attended seminars that dealt with issues concerning diversity, racism and discrimination in Swedish cultural life.



The LP was situated in the city of Umeå and gathered ten participants from nine different CIs, two documentary filmmakers and two from the project group, all together thirteen people.

The conference was very content loaded with leading researchers and experts in human rights, diversity racism and culture from Sweden and abroad. The participants took part in the overall program and attended relevant seminars and lectures based on individual choices. In the evenings, the group gathered for internal discussions and exchange. The days were inspiring and the CIs strengthened their relations to each other, and also enlarged their networks, meeting other participants and speakers.

An often-articulated phrase from the speakers at the podiums was that it's time to move from talking about the issue of diversity and inclusion to implementation and concrete actions. Many speakers expressed the urge for methods and tools for this work and the participants attended several discussions with proposals on how to measure and evaluate and demand responsibility for change. This was very encouraging since an important part of the project "Brokering Migrants' Cultural Participation" is to develop a benchmark tool specifically designed for this.

In conclusion, it feels that the time is ready for a sectorial overall usage of a benchmark such as ours, a tool for development of diversity, inclusion and integration. The benchmark tool (or other similar tools) should be used in order to evaluate the institutions work with diversity and inclusion, and articulate this perspective much stronger in evaluations and feedbacks. Public funding should be measured towards its results and its work with diversity and inclusion of migrants. Public bodies should work much more proactively with funding as a steering tool.

5. Learning Partnership 4 (December–March)

Two cultural visits with cultural institutions and NGOs rooted in migrant self-organisation were organised. The fourth set of Learning Partnerships took part during two days with one visit to the theatre Riksteatern on December 5, 2014, and one visit at the Culture House City Theatre Kulturhuset Stadsteatern on March 17, 2015.



The LPs were situated in the municipality of Botkyrka and Stockholm and gathered eight migrant participants that consisted of newly arrived Arabic speaking migrants from Syria and Iraq, one interpreter, one representative from Arbetsförmedlingen etableringslots (the Unemployment agency introduction unit), one documentary filmmaker, two project representatives from the CIs, one external project leader, one project manager and approximately 60 actors, dramatists, technicians, directors etc. from the two theatres. We also invited another initiative that works in a nearby region with an integration project with newly arrived immigrant artists and cultural workers.

The visits included guided tours in the premises, followed by meetings with actors, dramatists and directors and visits to performances. The aim was to exchange views and knowledge, to introduce colleagues and stimulate relations. The visits were very successful and all participants found it productive to meet in such a professional setting. The Arabic speaking group carried a lot of knowledge that the Swedish theatres were interested in for professional development. There was an immediate request of a presentation of theatre plays from the Arabic region, which led to a play reading of a newly written play by a Syrian author, and a new meeting this time with a Palestinian theatre director just a few weeks later. The theatres are also discussing internships with representatives from the group and the target group.

The project team and the two CIs agreed on developing an informal network consisting of the participating Arabic speaking migrants that could visit other CIs and establish new contacts, even after the end of the Brokering Migrants' Cultural Participation project.

6. Sharing conference (8 December)

Intercult and Region Västerbotten organised a one-day conference, "The future of Cultural Institutions in Europe: the right to culture, irrespective of identity and background", that focused on diversity and cultural institutions. The conference was located at the Culture House City Theatre Kulturhuset Stadsteatern in Stockholm and was attended by 250 participants. The program included presentations and panels from a variety of speakers.



The conference included a presentation of the report from the European OMC group on Intercultural Dialogue "the role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue". The Swedish representative in the group, Mårten Lempert from The National Arts Council, presented the report. The European perspective was then reflected on by Sabine Frank from Platform for Intercultural Europe.

One session in the afternoon was devoted to the project Brokering Migrants' Cultural Participation. This session included a presentation of the project and its activities and a presentation of four of the participating CIs, under the headline "Sharing of knowledge and practical examples: How have we done?"

The National Theatre Riksteatern presented how they have worked with developing audiences and organising performing arts events while mapping migrants by language rather than ethnicity. This has been a long-term and strategic work based on the vision of a theatre for all Swedes and it has been particularly successful with the large Turkish speaking migrant group and the large migrant community from the Balkans.



The regional theatre Västerbottensteatern presented how they use the artistic repertoire as a starting point and inspiration, in order to develop the theatre's work with diversity and inclusion.

The Culture House City Theatre Kulturhuset Stadsteatern presented how they have opened the house as a meeting space for new audiences with a news-related debate scene and podcasts. Specially selected people with norm critical and global perspectives produce the podcasts, where experiences from migration are part of the value in the transmission and message.

The museum Malmö Museer presented how they work with strategic recruitment and long-term collaborations in order to develop diversity within the organisation, the exhibitions and the audiences. The newest example is when they employed the refugee author, journalist Parvin Ardalan, who at that time spoke very little Swedish.

The conference took the role of being a manifestation for the project, and it was crowded with a mix of people: young activists, cultural workers, and senior heads of CIs etc. The project team and organisers received both critique and positive feedback. The critique was mainly from colleagues that are already engaged in the issue and that are fed up with the discussions. They feel that the discussions have been going on for such a long time and very little has happened to include migrants in Swedish cultural life. There was an articulated fatigue and shame about political correctness in the room. But at the same time, many expressed the urgent need to discuss these issues and learn about concrete tools that can be used to recruit and include migrant groups in the CIs.

To secure relevance for the CIs, there is an urge to implement diversity strategies and make room for more voices and global outreach. CIs should therefore regard development in competence in diversity and inclusion as part of overall organisational development.

A strong conclusion is that we cannot rely on random project works and initiatives when it comes to support change in the cultural sector. Clear and articulated policy documents and/or concrete strategies on how to work with diversity and inclusion that are anchored within the board and the management are crucial for success.

Finally, there are many specialised, competent and experienced independent organisations already working with these issues. Therefore we recommend the CIs to set up teams with strategic partners in order to secure the work. These teams could for example consist of a mix of internal and external competence and thus be more integrated than a project.

7. Conclusion

As described, the learning partnerships have brought new relevant knowledge to the participating cultural institutions. The representatives of the CIs have expressed that attending the learning partnerships and being part of the project overall has been a great learning experience. Several institutions have already implemented some of the new methods presented in the learning partnerships. For example the operahouse Folkoperan has successfully tested a competence based recruitment method and others are about to map migrant groups in their catchment area.

One of the biggest challenges of the project has been to gather the same participants at all learning partnerships since the activities have been spread during a period of four to seven months and, most of the times, they were held more than one day. Nevertheless, most of

the institutions have been able to send at least one representative from their organisation, unfortunately not always the same person.

Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the learning partnerships:

The development in intercultural competence and diversity should be regarded as part of the overall organisational development in order to stay relevant. Clear and articulated policy documents and/or concrete strategies on how to work with diversity and inclusion that are anchored within the board and the management are crucial for success.

Diversity and inclusion for all inhabitants in Sweden should be a highly prioritised goal for publicly funded cultural institutions.

A tool for development of diversity, inclusion and integration should be used in order to evaluate the institutions work with diversity and inclusion.

Teams with strategic partners with a mix of internal and external competence should be set up.

Each cultural worker needs to reflect on its role as a gatekeeper and include norm critical and postcolonial perspectives.