The Treasure Trove of Democracy

*Proposal for a
National Strategy for Libraries*

X MARKS THE SPOT OF DEMOCRACY'S TREASURE TROVE

PREFACE

The following is the proposal for a National Strategy for Libraries to strengthen and develop the entire Swedish library system. It is important as a defence of democracy and for the ability of the individual to freely operate in society, with access to knowledge and literature. The starting point is The Swedish Library Act with its opening section on *libraries for everyone*. The vision for the libraries is for them to be there for everyone, taking into account the needs and circumstances of the individual. The ultimate objective of library activities as a whole is to cultivate minds and thus also democracy. We see the libraries as an independent force in the edifice of a democratic society, a fifth branch of government. The services and content of the libraries represent the treasures of the people. At the same time, the truths and facts they hold pose a threat to the enemies of democracy.

Based on the vision of the Act and on the goals of the strategy, we define six working areas, or means, for reaching the aims we are striving towards. We highlight the libraries as society's open spaces, as well as their importance for reading, learning and research. We propose new national digital library services and a strengthened common infrastructure.

We are seeking change. The library system needs to be developed, renewed and reinforced. The strategy is intended to set a direction that looks 10 years into the future, to the year 2030. It is a national strategy that ties in with what is happening in the world beyond Sweden's borders. It is inspired by developments in the Nordic countries, and by library strategies and development goals being pursued worldwide. Sweden has lagged behind in terms of digitalisation in the library sector, and this is a trend that needs to be reversed.

A strategy does not become a reality without a link to concrete measures and reforms. Therefore, in parallel with the strategy itself, we present a proposed reform package with highly concrete measures resulting from the deliberations in the strategy. The reform package has to do with building national digital library services, and digitalising our cultural heritage and heritage of knowledge. It is important to strengthen library activities for Sweden's national minorities and the indigenous Sami, and to ensure the supply of accessible media for people with disabilities, and to increase access to media in languages other than Swedish. We wish to clarify the national and regional level's significance as a support for the public-facing libraries, and emphasise the need for a strong school library system that is consistent throughout the country. Free access to scientific publications and research results must be ensured. The libraries can develop new ways of using and processing the digitised heritage of knowledge.

Recurrent, regular analysis and follow-up are required in order for the strategy to be viable and to lead to change and development. Our considerations and proposals are based on extensive work that has taken place since the autumn of 2015. We have published 14 reports and 10 films that should be seen as an important basis for continued work and implementation. During our work, we have engaged in continuous dialogue with the library system's stakeholders. The draft strategy that was published in the spring of 2018 received nearly 100 written comments. The well-attended dialogue meetings held by the secretariat all over the country also heavily influenced the final strategy proposal.

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National Strategy for Libraries

Introduction

Here you will find both wanted and unexpected knowledge, knowledge that is comfortable and knowledge that is not. There can be no source criticism without sources.

Today

Libraries belong to the people. They are the libraries of the children, the pupils, the university students, the teachers, the researchers, the minorities, the immigrants, the convicts, the patients, the indigenous people, the genealogists, the specialists, the journalists, the musicians, the curious and those with a thirst for knowledge – indeed, of us all. This is true of all libraries in the public library system.

The libraries, with their librarians and other staff, give the individual power and the opportunity to function in society. The sources are easily accessible to everyone here, at no charge to the individual. Here you will find both wanted and unexpected knowledge, knowledge that is comfortable and knowledge that is not. This is where our cultural heritage and heritage of knowledge are kept. There can be no source criticism without sources.

Here are society's open spaces. This is where the low-key meetings happen. There is peace and quiet here, but there are also talks and discussions going on. The position of the libraries in Swedish society is strong, and the libraries are one of the most trusted and appreciated societal institutions.

Today there are 1,120 public libraries (Swedish *folkbibliotek*) with 63 million visitors each year. Their total annual lending of physical media runs to just over 58 million, plus an annual lending volume of nearly 2 million e-books. The public libraries are part of a library sector with a total estimated annual budget of SEK 9 billion.

At the same time, there are changes occurring that affect the libraries. Democracy is increasingly being put to the test. Digitalisation risks making the libraries less relevant if they do not rise up to meet people's demand for digital resources, knowledge and reading experiences online. Changes in the economy, demographics, migration and language also present major challenges. Operations can be hampered by a lack of coordination and synergies, digital lock-in, expensive copyright and publishing oligopolies.

Unequal circumstances and resources between the municipalities must be dealt with, as must increased demands for skills development among both members of the public and librarians. It is troubling that not all schools meet the Swedish Education Act's requirements regarding school library activities, and that libraries do not reach all potential users.

Digitalisation entails new requirements for the entire library system. The boundaries of what is true and verifiable are constantly shifting. Sweden has lagged behind other countries in terms of offering digital library services and digital access to cultural heritage and the heritage of knowledge. The cataloguing process will change as a result of new, powerful search engines and algorithms, along with existing and future methods for intelligent self-learning search systems. All of this holds opportunities and provides incentives for change. Digitalisation is an opportunity for the libraries to increase their relevance.

Yesterday

Historically speaking, access to literature and reading has been a class issue. Books were precious items that were reserved for the upper strata of society. The wealthy built their own libraries, as did academics and the church. These libraries also acted as symbols of status and power, with a significant value to collectors. Once the printing press had established itself, in 1661 an order of chancellery was enacted ruling that all printed matter had to be delivered to the King for pre-publication screening. This is why the National Library of Sweden has collected everything printed in Sweden for centuries. The country's older research libraries were long available only to members of the Academy.

In parallel with the establishment of public elementary schools and popular education during the 19th century, local parish libraries were also established, partly financed by duties on spirits. During the first few decades of the 20th century, the public libraries emerged out of the popular education efforts of the labour movement, the temperance movement and the adult education associations. Library pioneer Valfrid Palmgren was early to identify the libraries' potential for development. Her ideas, together with the libraries that grew out of the popular movements, laid the foundation for the modern public libraries. They were to be freely available and open to everyone, including children and the socially disadvantaged.

At the end of the 1940s, a report was presented on public and school libraries that laid the foundation for a modern public library system with central libraries, lending centres and municipal libraries. The report also proposed streamlining measures, such as central cataloguing.

LIBRARIES FOR EVERYONE

GOAL
DEMOCRACY

*A democratic society in which every-
one can freely access the world's
collected literature and knowledge, in
order to be able to operate
in society on their
own terms*

MEANS
READING

Inspire reading experiences, increase every-
one's reading and language comprehension
and strengthen the position of literature

MEANS
SOCIETY'S OPEN SPACES

Use the libraries as society's open spaces
for mental cultivation, experiences and
conversations

MEANS
LEARNING

Develop the population's opportunities
for lifelong learning and free opinion formation
by means of a coherent chain of educational
libraries

MEANS
RESEARCH

**Strengthen the libraries as a constituent part
of research infrastructure and enable open
access to scientific results from all
publicly-funded research**

MEANS
NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES

Make as much information and literature as possible
freely and digitally available to everyone

MEANS
COMMON INFRASTRUCTURE

Support and stimulate the public-facing libraries
with effective, collaborative national and regional
library functions and well-trained librarians

In the mid-1940s there were about 14,000 university students in Sweden. The two university libraries that existed at the time were the domain of researchers. Just a few decades later, the number of students and colleges had multiplied several-fold. In the 1960s university and college libraries began developing into the open learning environments that they are today.

The libraries were very early to understand and embrace the possibilities afforded by technology.

Developments in the direction of today's libraries took a big leap forward in the 1970s. This decade was also characterised by a vigorous library debate. Reforms, technology and the new government cultural policy shaped the orientation and development of public libraries. The establishment of The Swedish School of Library and Information Science at the University of Borås made it possible to employ librarians with a common educational background at various types of libraries throughout the country. Outreach activities, the dynamic development of children's libraries, an expanded selection of books for the blind and more mobile libraries were some of the elements that characterised the public library activities at the time. Activities to promote reading increased rapidly.

Efforts to streamline library administration were supported by centralised purchasing channels. The libraries were able to procure materials that did not need to be unique to each individual library, such as catalogue records, from the joint library undertaking known as Biblioteks- tjänst (BTJ). Bibliotekstjänst also made early investments in the development of an automated library system (Swedish acronym BUMS) and in the bibliographic database BURK. The Swedish Agency

for Public Management built the Library Information System, which later became Libris and was transferred to the National Library in 1977.

This laid the foundation for a stream- lining initiative, and in certain cases contributed to homogenisation and to a reduced local identity. The computerisa- tion of libraries enabled media collections that were more open and more shareable. The libraries were quick to understand and embrace the possibilities afforded by tech- nology. Technological developments also expanded the range of library materials in the form of audio-visual media.

1984 marked the publication of the re- port entitled *Folkbibliotek i Sverige* (Public Libraries in Sweden), which raised ques- tions and sparked debate as to whether the public libraries should be seen as infor- mation providers or cultural mediators. There was no simple answer to this ques- tion. Eventually, discussions shifted over to issues related to quality of service, library construction contracts and the library user as a "customer". This led to a discussion about the importance of participation and the conceptual transition from collection- orientated libraries to user-orientated libraries. The zero-cost principle, i.e. the right to cost-free borrowing, was a recurring theme. Eventually, statutory regulation of the libraries in Sweden was proposed, as in the other Nordic countries. The first Swedish Library Act became a reality in 1996.

The technological developments of the 1980s and 90s coincided with new educa- tional reforms. The 1996 Parliament bill Research and Society contains statements to the effect that the government views the entire public library system as a coherent, synergetic resource. Proposals were submitted to the effect that Libris should be developed into a nationwide system for all libraries, and that the computer network for higher education and research (SUNET) should be offered to the public lib-

raries. However, this was rejected by most municipalities. The focus was on flexible learning, small colleges and regional growth. The needs of remote students were given particular attention. The public lib- raries were given a clearer role in learning. Municipal learning centres were set up in connection with some libraries. The gro- wing numbers of college students and adult learners in Sweden moved freely between university libraries and public libraries.

In the following decades, access to information via the Internet changed the conditions under which the libraries operated. This period coincided with increasing requirements in terms of the libraries' competency with regard to the functioning of technology and informa- tion content, and how to evaluate these factors. The heightened requirements also concerned the libraries' handling of ever- faster networks. The research libraries were quick to foresee the need for digital resources and new ways to gather and disseminate information. The transition from analogue media to digital accelerated. Things took somewhat longer for the public libraries. But a certain amount of col- laboration and joint procurement activi- ties were initiated, often with the regional libraries as initiators.

The librarian curriculum was changed and the academic subject of library and information science was established at a number of Swedish universities and colleges. The focus of education and re- search policy was increasingly on inno- vation. When scientific publishing and research infrastructure came into focus, the libraries did not hesitate to play a role in its development. The important work to achieve open access commenced.

Tomorrow

The time horizon for this strategy is the position in the year 2030. The hope is that those who live in the society of the 2030s will be sufficiently well-read, informed and

competent that they will be able to contribute to a democratic world orientated towards the guiding principles of sustainability and human rights. This is a hopeful perspective. The societal institutions that stand for openness, independence, freedom of opinion, knowledge and quality of life hold the key to a good future. The library is one such institution.

Access to credible information, along with the ability to assimilate and manage information and various digital means of expression, will be essential in order to achieve the goals established by the United Nations (UN) in Agenda 2030. In particular, libraries can contribute to achieving the following Agenda 2030 goals:

● Quality education for everyone
● Reduced inequality
● Peaceful and inclusive societies
● Sustainable cities and communities
● Reduced production and consumption

The libraries are the common concern and property of the user and everyone in society. They represent a field and an arena where conversations and communication provide the basis for strengthening trust and enhancing democratic approaches. The libraries are used by many people, who have confidence in the librarians. The libraries are society's independent knowledge repository. The Swedish Library Act ensures everyone's right to a library. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child gives children space and priority in libraries. In its global vision for the future, the international library organisation IFLA paints a picture of libraries as necessary, natural and desirable parts of a future in which the libraries:

● provide free opportunities for learning, research, reading, experiences, creation and inspiration

● are present near the user, making the libraries easy to use
● extend far beyond the library walls, are digital and outwardly-directed
● are naturally and equitably integrated into the structures and activities of which they form a part, such as schools, universities, public authorities or local communities
● are open to the outside world
● operate in participation with users and in collaboration with civil society and the institutions of society
● invite those who do not yet make use of libraries by adopting creative and non-bureaucratic approaches
● serve as a venue that people seek out in order to share experiences, thoughts and creative expressions with others

This vision unites the world's libraries around the shared objectives. The global vision of a strong and united library system powers literate, informed and participative societies.

In order to meet different needs, the libraries' activities are complex and changeable, with varied content. By means of digitalisation and collaboration, everyone can access the information, knowledge and literature they are looking for, irrespective of who they are, where they live and what needs they have. The libraries' digital development caters to people's changed behaviours, media landscapes and communication patterns. Sweden shall – on the basis of its IT policy objectives – be the best in the world at using the opportunities inherent in digitalisation, to which the libraries contribute. Sweden shall not lag behind the outside world.

By 2030 the libraries are powerful and their economic conditions are sustainable. The entire public library system is efficient, desirable and successful thanks to good collaboration with civil society

and societal institutions, and among the libraries themselves. Public-facing libraries where the users are, such as public libraries, research libraries and school libraries, are the focus of the supporting library activities: the regional library activities and The National Library, as well as the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM), the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish Arts Council. In the year 2030, the majority of the libraries' media resources will be digital, searchable and accessible at no cost to the user. New conditions have been created for research, lifelong learning and education thanks to an implemented regime of open access to published research and open research data. The research libraries are well integrated into the institutions' research settings and into the open scientific community.

In the libraries, the users encounter trained librarians and other experts who act as enablers and problem solvers to guide the wide range of library users. In school libraries and research libraries, pupils, students, teachers and researchers collaborate with school librarians and information experts as part of the learning and research infrastructure. All libraries focus on the perspective of the user, irrespective of who or where they are. Librarians guide and support the users in their ability to negotiate digital context and to assess and critically review data and information content. Participation in society requires information and media literacy, something that more and more people have acquired. Users are encouraged in their desire to explore, experience, learn, read, develop, and be challenged and surprised. The vision of universal participation is supported with democracy as the goal. The libraries are society's open spaces, with space for reading, learning and research; the society has built new digital library services and a common supporting infrastructure. ▶

Democracy

A democratic society in which everyone can freely access the world's collected literature and knowledge, in order to be able to operate in society on their own terms

Introduction

The library is the democrat's treasure trove and the dictator's chamber of horrors.
Björn Ranelid, author

The role and mission of libraries is becoming increasingly important in a time in which democracy is threatened by dark forces the world over. The libraries are a sort of fifth branch of government, a constitutional pillar that balances the other branches of government. The libraries' activities and collections, as well as the literature and knowledge to which the librarian provides the key, are the jewels of democratic society. The starting point is provided by the introductory sections of the Swedish Instrument of Government:

1§ All public power in Sweden proceeds from the people.

Swedish democracy is founded on the free formation of opinion and on universal and equal suffrage. It is realised through a representative and parliamentary form of government and through local self-government.

§ 2 Public power shall be exercised with respect for the equal worth of all and the liberty and dignity of the individual.

The personal, economic and cultural welfare of the individual shall be fundamental aims of public activity.

These formulations have a direct and practical significance for the library system. The objective is to safeguard the ability to maintain fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law and human liberties and rights. We must defend and promote our democracy and the rule of law against all domestic and foreign actors who may wish to undermine them. These values have an inalienable intrinsic value. They provide the foundation for the prosperity and resilience of our society.

This democratic mandate, which is the same for all societal institutions, has served as the starting point for the work on the National Strategy for Libraries. The activities of libraries contribute to the development of society in general and to the deepening of democracy inasmuch as everyone is given better opportunities for transparency, influence and participation in the democratic process. The fact that libraries are required to promote development of democratic society is expressed in the objective regarding everyone's participation in civic life. The fact that libraries are required to contribute to the free formation of opinion underlines the importance of adopting a neutral attitude in relation to the information provided, and the importance of supporting the free exchange of opinions in other activities as well. This provision means that library activities must be characterised by openness to different perspectives and that these activities must be free from

censorship or other obstructions. Freedom of expression is the basis on which the free formation of opinion rests.

This thought recurs in the guiding clause of The Swedish Library Act (2 §):

The libraries in the public library system shall promote the development of democratic society by contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and free opinion formation.

The libraries in the public library system shall promote the place of literature and the interest in education, enlightenment, training and research, and in cultural activities in general. Library activities shall be available to everyone.

Accessibility

Everyone having access to libraries is essential, and such universal access serves as a basis of the libraries' legitimacy. The accessibility of the libraries' content, services and premises shall be of high quality, and shall be equitable. This concept is to be understood on the basis of the following aspects: physical, cognitive, linguistic, intellectual, psychosocial, administrative and economic accessibility. The Swedish Library Act and the Swedish Education Act enshrine access to library activities.

The ambition is for all publication in the minority languages to be available via all libraries through digitalisation as either e-books or print on demand.

Everyone has the right to access the library activities they need. The libraries should develop methods to reach those who currently do not know what libraries can offer, or who for practical reasons are

prevented from using libraries. Increased digitalisation of services and offerings is also a path towards increased accessibility.

Library content must be varied to suit everyone, and so that everyone can have access to different types of media. This is achieved through cooperation between the libraries, and calls for coordinated systems and joint ownership of the resources. The competence of library staff is crucial for everyone to have equal opportunities to use the libraries' content and services.

Neutrality and Media Collections

People have the right of free access to literature and other media. The opening section of The Swedish Library Act guarantees the right of people to form an opinion. The Act also states that public libraries' range of media and services must be characterised by its comprehensiveness and quality. Likewise, the Act guarantees the promotion of reading and access to literature.

No one library can contain everything. As a guarantee that people can still get the literature they need, all libraries form part of a cooperation. Traditionally this has involved interlibrary loans, i.e. lending between libraries, but today the cooperation has as much to do with digitalisation. Such coordination may also extend to the weeding of titles. National preservation and security plans are needed for indispensable media titles that must not disappear, especially at the research and specialised libraries. The National Library has a special position as the only recipient of electronic and audiovisual legal deposit copies. The required change is that the collected material must be given broader accessibility.

Lies and Propaganda

The library system must convey knowledge about source criticism and information retrieval, as well as algorithms and filter bubbles that risk contributing to the frag-

mentation of public discourse and reduced confidence in basic facts. The libraries have a mandate and the staff needed to assist the population in achieving good information and media literacy (IML). They are thus contributing to raising the level of knowledge throughout society. University library and information science programs, like regional library activities, are able to support and provide libraries with relevant expertise. In crisis situations and during wartime, rumours, fake news and propaganda can be countered by a library system that plays an important role in the safe, independent and credible dissemination of information for the society as a whole as part of national civil defence. Media collections and librarians offer facts, search and source criticism, as well as a space for reflection as a defence.

Privacy and Secrecy

Digitalisation must not erode the application of the secrecy and privacy provisions at the libraries (including library secrecy as stipulated in Chapter 40 3 § Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (OSL) and the secrecy obligation set out in Chapter 21 § 7 OS). The users need to be sure that information contained in the libraries' records about the personal circumstances of individuals, and about borrowing, reservations, other forms of orders and their usage of information technology, are never passed on to third parties. Technology currently enables the suppliers of e-books to gauge reader behaviour in detail, including what they read, how fast and for how long. There must be no suspicion that the state or commercial interests are tracking the political or personal preferences of library users.

The libraries must be a protected place, meaning that the technical security solutions at the libraries must be reliable. The libraries must own and have internal control of the personal data that relate to library use, must actively cull the data and

must only collect the data needed for their mission.

Integration and Inclusion

For those who are new to Sweden, libraries are an important way into society. It has been this way for several decades, and libraries have shown their ability to adapt rapidly during the flows of refugees seen in recent years. The public libraries are a key player in facilitating the integration and inclusion of new arrivals, and are generally good at responding to people with a mother tongue other than Swedish. It is important for society as a whole to continue to make use of, support and invest in the activities that the libraries provide. This role should be made visible in the local and regional library plans.

The same goes for the crucial right of all library users to access the world's collected literature and knowledge. Access to literature in the original language or to literature that has not been translated is a matter of knowledge and education, which also has a bearing on Sweden's role in the world.

At the libraries, people can orientate themselves without encountering government officials whose decisions have a decisive impact on their lives and finances. The libraries should be a natural place to be in and a place of study, not least for young people and adult learners. The libraries can also lend support by providing access to the information and communication technology needed for new arrivals to have the opportunity to communicate with and participate in society. The demand for multilingual library staff is growing. This also calls for expertise in multicultural issues, media supply in different languages, material in easy-to-read Swedish, civic and societal information and the ability to adapt their library work. The libraries' opportunities to hire staff with multilingual skills should therefore be strengthened through various government support ini-

tiatives. Continuous skills development in this area can take place as part of a nationwide plan via the institutions for the further education of librarians.

In order to achieve efficiency, a lending centre function similar to today's International Library is needed. There should be a clear mandate that is reinforced and extended compared to the national support measures currently existing in this area. The national support measures must include consultative support with regard to various multilingual and multicultural issues.

Procurement, purchasing, cataloguing and weeding of multilingual literature requires specific expertise that is almost impossible to come by in smaller library organisations. The National Library authority should be responsible for the lending centre as a whole. In order to achieve the best possible results for public-facing libraries, there should be collaboration between the national level and the regional libraries.

National Minorities and the Indigenous Sami

The five national minorities are an indispensable part of Sweden, of its history and its cultural heritage. The national support provided to the libraries whose users belong to the national minorities and the indigenous Sami needs to be strengthened. This effort is the responsibility of all types of libraries, and should be fast-tracked. The Swedish Library Act stipulates that the national minorities are to be given special attention. The Sami are an indigenous people with their own legislation known as the Sami Parliament Act. The Sami Parliament is a public authority.

The opportunities for the national minorities to retain and develop their language and culture in Sweden must be promoted. Children's development of a multicultural identity and use of their own minority language must be accorded

priority. The revitalisation of the languages and the cultural identity is crucial. All those who belong to the national minority groups are entitled to their languages and to consistent library services no matter where in the country they live. A structured dialogue with the groups with a view to designing desirable library services shall be carried out pursuant to law. The libraries must work to avoid structural discrimination. Strengthening and protecting the languages and cultural identities shall also form part of the libraries' duties.

Multilingual library activities require national support to avoid being unequal.

Library activities for, about, by and with the national minority groups have at least two starting points. One is media in minority languages, and the other has to do with the majority's knowledge of the minorities. Libraries must therefore contribute to raising the visibility of the cultures and identities of the national minorities, as well as the national minority languages, in order to increase knowledge and understanding among the general public. This requires attention, including arranging events and other activities.

The libraries require the support of central institutions that are able to contribute in the form of skills development, consultative support and media supply. Several of the national minorities' libraries can be accorded responsibility for their respective language areas as a state-funded resource library. These specially-designated resource libraries for various national minorities and the indigenous Sami can then work in an auxiliary capacity and offer these services to the libraries, preferably via a lending

centre. *The ambition is for all publications in minority languages to be available via all libraries through digitalisation as either e-books or print on demand.* Picture books, children's books, young adult books, adult books, accessible media, research publications and non-fiction form a linguistic developmental progression that needs to be established in a multicultural identity with strong support from the libraries. Radio, television, film, music, audio books and books for the blind are very important. The national mandates for the specially-designated resource libraries should have this as their common point of departure.

Right to Function

The term "right to function" is used with reference to the right of human beings to function in various situations, regardless of any disability and regardless of the obstacles that exist in society. The term can be used in relation to a discrete everyday situation, but can also be used in a political context to describe the collective right of various groups. In other words, it has to do with the rights of individuals. The aim is to shift the focus from obstacles and special solutions to principles enshrining everyone's human rights.

Everyone's right to library resources on equal terms is a question of democracy, one that applies to all libraries. All library contexts must enable those with disabilities to use library resources on the same terms as others by responding to their needs and by making media, facilities and other resources available.

Technological developments open up new opportunities for groups with various disabilities. The Swedish Agency for Accessible Media has a special responsibility here. The Swedish Agency for Accessible Media should be given a clearer mandate to open up the possibility, over the long term, of reducing the scope of custom services that the Agency provides, in favour of universal solutions and universal design

of e-books, audiobooks and books for the blind. At the same time, people with reading impairments are a heterogeneous group whose members have differing capacities to use the universal digital media services available on the market. For this reason, the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media's service aimed at those who need customised solutions may well need to be retained in parallel with the universal solutions, even in the longer term.

Between 15 and 20 percent of the population is thought to have some form of reading impairment or unfamiliarity with reading, meaning that they need to read text in an accessible format. The objective is for more of those who need to use accessible media to do so.

Children's Rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) will be incorporated into Swedish law as of 1 January 2020. According to the Convention, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. The child is entitled to express his or her opinion in all matters concerning him or her. The child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion shall be respected. The CRC specifically mentions children belonging to national minorities and indigenous peoples. According to The Swedish Library Act, the public libraries are required to give particular attention to children and young people in order to promote their linguistic development and to stimulate reading. Children's rights and the right of children to be present in the libraries are therefore strongly set in law, and are to be accorded priority in the activities of the public libraries.

Libraries are required to adopt both a child's perspective and the perspectives of children. Having a child's perspective means that the adult world strives to look after children's interests, whereas the perspectives of children correspond

to the views, wishes and needs of individual children. Library facilities are very important spaces for children and young people. The library must be a welcoming, safe and inspiring place where all children are treated with respect and where their questions and suggestions are taken into account.

The development of children's libraries should be based on both a child's perspective and the perspectives of children when allocating resources, designing facilities, apportioning media costs, and in the selection and purchasing of media and staffing. The perspectives of children and a child's perspective must extend to all staff and the way they approach and respond to users. Children are accorded priority by law, are significant borrowers of library materials and are frequent visitors. This must also be reflected in the way the libraries prioritise resources. Children's library activities should be shaped together with and by children. Children's actual participation must be respected. The children are entitled to a wide range of media which, in addition to literature, includes access to audiovisual media in all forms.

Library activities for, by and with children should be accorded ample scope in the municipal and regional library plans. Statistics and other monitoring methods need to be developed in order to enable follow-up as to whether priorities are actually being set for children and young people and whether they are having an impact. Follow-ups are important in order to ensure that the objectives set out in the library plans are being pursued and that the resources made available to children are increasingly responsive to children's use of the library. ▶

Some Conclusions

The opportunities for the national minorities and the indigenous Sami to retain and develop their language and culture in Sweden must be promoted.

The ambition is for all publication in the minority languages to be available via all libraries through digitalisation as either e-books or print on demand.

Multilingual library activities require national support to avoid being unequal.

In crisis situations and during wartime, rumours, fake news and propaganda can be countered by a library system that plays an important role in the independent dissemination of information as part of national civil defence.

The Swedish Agency for Accessible Media should be given a clearer mandate to support universal solutions for the services provided by the Agency.

Libraries must own and have internal control of the personal data that relate to library use.

The library must be a welcoming, safe and inspiring place where all children are to be treated with respect and where their questions and suggestions are taken into account.

Statistics and other monitoring methods need to be developed in order to be able to track whether priorities are actually being set for children and young people and whether they are having an impact.

The libraries' opportunities to hire staff with multilingual skills should be strengthened through various government support measures.

Society's open spaces

MEANS *Use the libraries as society's open spaces for learning, experiences and conversations*

Introduction

The library is at the heart of the community. In small towns, where residents are fully capable of taking to the streets to defend their libraries, and in the world's big cities, where landmark libraries are built in wood, glass and granite. The library as a building, as a room, holds a fundamental meaning to all users. But it is more than just a building: it is also operates as workplace and a conceptual idea.

The activities offered by libraries should be linked to the libraries' core mission of disseminating knowledge and literature.

For school pupils, the library is a place for study and recreation. For university students on campus, the library is often the quintessential image of the university. This is where everyone meets across faculty lines, and where creativity gathers. The public library is often the first institution that a newly arrived refugee sees. It couples connections to the past with the arrival's admission ticket to the new life.

The library houses society's open spaces. These must be used, affirmed and strengthened. The nearby local library or mobile library is just as important to the user as the large city library. The libraries, librarians and other occupational groups at the library create a sense of participation and belonging, while also inspiring people to read, and gain knowledge and experiences. This is where many children encounter books on a large scale for the first time. It is also where authors can meet their readers. Here you will find life, conversation, film, music and casual meetings.

It's no accident that brand-new libraries for encounters and experiences are being built around the world at this moment. Helsinki has a new Central Library between the railway station and the Finnish Parliament building. Oslo is building its new city library by the harbour, right next to the opera and Oslo Central Station. Copenhagen has The Black Diamond and Aarhus has the new modern library, Dokk1. Developments in our neighbouring countries and other countries can serve as inspiration.

Rooms for Meetings

The libraries must be free, independent rooms for meetings. There it should be possible to be among others even when alone, and to be treated kindly and on equal terms. The library is there on the user's terms, based on his or her particular circumstances.

In the library as a space, everyone is able to partake of the library, but is also able to share of themselves. A meeting is more than just an encounter between people. It can also be an unexpected meeting with text in a book, or with a story in a lecture, a film or an author visit. Monitoring to ensure the existence of open, free opportunities to share knowledge, creative ambitions and experiences is tantamount to safeguarding a sustainable and inclusive society. For students, the library is a sanctuary where they are able to ask questions and get support without being evaluated or graded. The library facilities should be designed to be a place that is functional, but also safe, restful and inspiring. The visitors should feel that it is their library.

More people should be able to use libraries than today, and every library should be able to set measurable targets for increased utilisation. In order to increase library use, the decision makers can invest in extended and custom opening hours, but when and how much must be decided with reference to local conditions. Investing in libraries with extended opening hours should be an expansive measure, and should not replace staffed libraries in the interest of cost-cutting.

Events, Inspiration and Experiences

Events such as author visits, exhibitions, film screenings, concerts and lectures are organised at libraries. The purpose is to spark curiosity, to prepare the way for discourse and learning, and to inspire attendees to make of use the library's offerings. Events can also include a course or study circle related, for example, to information search or digital tools.

University libraries make the research and teaching done by the institution visible. The libraries should be a place where different people can encounter artistic expressions in a well-known local environment.

Creating things together can awaken curiosity about others and about different

forms of expression, phenomena and facts in the outside world. For this reason, the libraries organise opportunities, often in collaboration with others, for people to work using different forms of creative expression. The activities offered by libraries should be linked to the libraries' core mission of disseminating knowledge and literature. Being a library user should be enjoyable and enriching, and should contribute to a good quality of life.

Accessibility

Digitalisation is one of the greatest change-driving factors in today's society, and provides the basis for innovation.

In the open spaces provided by libraries, everyone must be given an opportunity to access digitised media. Library activities that provide guidance on how to use digital tools and evaluate information and sources should be developed and reinforced. The libraries need to take on a key role in bridging the digital divide and continue the successful work currently being done, especially in conjunction with the life long learning education movement. Those who do not have access by other means must be given access to computers and other digital equipment at the libraries. This way, the libraries must be seen as society's path to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to become part of the digital society.

The public libraries must work to increase knowledge of how information technology can be used for knowledge acquisition and innovation. Continuous skills development and methodological development must be implemented for this reason. Library staff must monitor digital developments and inspire people to use digital technology.

Information and research that is locked away digitally can be made available at library facilities. Professionals can access the latest research in their respective fields to keep their knowledge up-to-date. Researchers and the general public can

access databases and research publications that are behind a paywall by using them on-site. It should be possible to read newspapers and magazines that are not publicly available online in libraries. The audio-visual cultural heritage and heritage of knowledge should be freely accessible here. Access to media in the physical library facilities becomes a bridge between analogue and digital accessibility.

Continuous skills development must be pursued so that library personnel are able to keep up with digital developments.

Sweden shall – on the basis of its IT policy objectives – be the best in the world at using the opportunities inherent in digitalisation. The Government is working to ensure that digitalisation contributes to sustainable growth, employment and a socially cohesive society. Libraries have a crucial role to play here.

Collaboration with the Outside World

The libraries are places for meeting as equals. One basis for inclusiveness is collaboration with the various organisations and associations in the local community, and with the preschool, the child health service, educational institutions and other stakeholders. The libraries are not locked into their own spaces. Important activities can take the form of outreach outside of library facilities.

Within the educational institutions, close interaction between libraries and educators, students, pupils and other staff is both natural and necessary. This cooperation can be expanded and further developed together with, for instance,

adult education associations, authors, artists and related organisations. Efforts to promote reading in the form of book discussions, storytelling and other family support for reading held beyond the library walls are important outreach activities.

The libraries can, where feasible locally, be integrated or co-located with other operations. The decision to do this is up to the local decision makers. To avoid confusing the user, it is important to ensure that the division of responsibilities is clear. ▶

Some Conclusions

More people should be able to use libraries than today, and every library should set measurable targets for increased utilisation.

The activities offered by libraries should be linked to the libraries' core mission of disseminating knowledge and literature.

Children's rights and the right of children to be present in the libraries are to be prioritised.

The libraries need to take on a key role in bridging digital gaps.

Continuous skills development must be pursued so that library personnel are able to keep up with digital developments.

The libraries' cooperation with adult education associations, authors, artists and related organisations can be expanded and developed.

Reading

MEANS *Inspire reading experiences, increase everyone's reading and language comprehension and strengthen the place of literature.*

Introduction

All citizens being able to read and understand what they read is a matter of democracy. No matter whether the reading is done with their eyes, ears or fingers, literacy and reading comprehension are necessary in order to understand and manage the outside world. Reading and the language skills and insights gained by reading lay the groundwork for active participation in democratic society.

According to the guiding clause of The Swedish Library Act, libraries are required to promote the place of literature and the interest in education, enlightenment, training and research, as well as cultural activities in general. Public libraries shall promote reading and access to literature in particular. This means that the libraries must constantly develop methods to promote reading. This is done by making deliberate choices regarding the purchase of literature, by collaborating with authors, and by actively inspiring people to read by providing support in the form of various reading-promoting methods and accessible media. The Swedish Arts Council is the authority that allocates Government grants for measures that promote reading.

The expanded concept of text is natural in library services. It is the content of the media, not the format, that is key. The libraries' offerings should be available in various formats, and should exhibit variation. It is of value for libraries to disseminate artistic and cultural expressions other than those contained in printed text. For example, making music, films and video games available should be a matter of course. The libraries' mandate to increase information and media literacy is closely linked to reading.

New books that have received cultural or distribution support should be distributed and made available digitally at the time of publication.

Libraries' efforts to promote reading are aimed at both children and adults. School libraries are an educational resource in the reading field as well. The school librarians' close collaboration with the educators can have a decisive impact on students' results. Public libraries should inspire children to engage in recreational reading and can complement the educational sector in the literacy field, but cannot compensate for potential shortcomings.

Love of Reading and Reading Skills

Generally speaking and by tradition, libraries are good at working on issues related to reading. Public libraries must safeguard the artistic value of literature, and must especially encourage people to read recreationally, stressing the importance of reading for health and quality of life. Because the libraries' efforts to promote reading are aimed at many different target groups, library staff must possess deep and broad expertise. In order to offer equivalent access to the specialist expertise required, collaboration between libraries is of the utmost importance.

The libraries can play a major role in reducing reading gaps related to gender, age, place of residence, language and social circumstances. The libraries must therefore give the users the tools they need to function as democratic individuals in society by conducting activities that promote reading and by providing accessible media.

State aid for the public libraries' efforts to promote reading is currently provided in the form of targeted project grants that can be applied for from the Swedish Arts Council. Methods for measuring reading and the effects of reading can be further refined, as the volume of library lending is a weak indicator of how much reading is actually being done.

Children's Reading

According to The Swedish Library Act, the public libraries are required to give particular attention to children and young people. The purpose is to promote language development and to stimulate children to read by offering literature and activities based on the needs and circumstances of the individual.

Although primary responsibility for teaching reading skills rests on the public school system, the ability to read is closely linked to the love of reading and actual reading habits. The libraries' joint digitalisation initiatives and their reading-stimulating content can be made more applicable to children.

In its report entitled Reading by Children and Young People – A Responsibility for the Whole of Society (SOU 2018:57), Läsdelegationen (the Reading Delegation)

identified a number of areas of particular importance and strategic significance for reading by children and young people. As part of the proposals submitted by the delegation, public libraries and school libraries can actively take on a role as drivers and strategists in the areas of media supply and expertise. It is valuable that the Reading Delegation specifically points to the importance of collaboration between multiple local and regional partners, including libraries. It is particularly important to take the children's librarians' expertise into account in the collaborative work on language development in very small children and the efforts to awaken interest in literature through words and images. Collaboration can then take place from a family-centred perspective, for instance with the child health service and preschool. It should be possible to further strengthen the role played by the children's libraries in children's recreational reading through the Reading Delegation's proposal regarding reading during school holidays.

The libraries' joint digitalisation initiatives can be made more applicable to children. The role played by the children's libraries in children's recreational reading should be further strengthened.

The importance of libraries for children with language difficulties and reading problems can be given more attention, as can the role of the libraries for children with disabilities. More children and young people with reading disabilities should be given access to the media available via the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media and the libraries. The efforts to promote rea-

ding aimed at children within the national minorities and the indigenous Sami can be strengthened. The same applies to the efforts aimed at children with a linguistic background other than Swedish. It is of strategic importance to strengthen continuous skills development related to reading by children and young people and efforts to promote reading in these groups. The Reading Delegation proposes that public librarians are given a reading promotion "boost," but school librarians and educators are welcome to participate as well.

Adult Reading

The government has identified libraries as a gathering point with literature in focus. The guiding clause of The Swedish Library Act links democracy and the place of literature.

The gaps between those who read and those who do not are increasing in society. Libraries are used by many people, but even more people can be inspired to read, which is why the libraries are needed as a local reading room, both physical and digital, where stories are read and told. The libraries should be provided with even better opportunities to carry out the mission of promoting reading among both children and adults.

Literature can broaden consciousness and provide insights far beyond one's own horizons, and is able to deepen experiences and open up the way to artistic experience. A democratic society supports literature and its position in society, and the libraries channel this support to the readers. The libraries can inspire people to engage in deeper reading of qualified texts. In-depth reading is needed for the ability to understand and learn from the outside world. Lacking the capacity to read for an extended period of time, people forfeit the opportunity to understand complex contexts and nuance.

Keeping and regaining one's health is important on the individual level, but also

on the societal level. Bibliotherapy, where reading has a role in the promotion of health, can have an impact if the libraries' expertise in this area is supported and cultivated.

Collaboration should be encouraged between the libraries and other professions and civil society organisations when it comes to reading and inspiring people to read. In addition to collaboration with schools and the educational sector, these efforts can include healthcare and the social sector. A collaboration might also be formed between the various authorities that deal with reading and literature as part of their mandates. The Reading Delegation stresses the importance of adults serving as reading role models for children, and the importance of a number of other reading-promotion initiatives aimed at adults. ▶

Some Conclusions

Public libraries should inspire children to engage in recreational reading and can complement the educational sector in the literacy field.

The libraries' joint digitalisation initiatives can be made more applicable to children. The role played by children's libraries in children's recreational reading should be further strengthened.

Methods for measuring reading and the effects of reading can be further refined.

New books that have received cultural or distribution support should be distributed and made available digitally at the time of publication.

One target group that could be the first to be given access to digitised media in their own languages is the national minorities and the indigenous Sami.

Public libraries must safeguard the artistic value of literature, and must especially encourage people to read recreationally, stressing the importance of reading to health and quality of life.

Learning

MEANS *Develop people's opportunities for lifelong learning and free opinion formation by means of a coherent chain of educational libraries*

Introduction

Learning through formal, informal and non-formal channels is a lifelong process. The more formal process of learning follows a common thread – a chain – for learning. This process starts in preschool and continues through the primary school years until secondary school, and then on to studies at university level. Students are supported on this path by different types of libraries that are tailored to the respective level of education and educational content. These libraries also include adult education libraries found at adult education centres, Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and in municipal adult education.

The school needs a school library that is comprehensive, well-financed and integrated with the teaching methods.

Many libraries associated with educational institutions in the formal educational sector can be referred to by the collective term educational libraries. The public libraries also function as a support for learning and education, for example through adult education associations, without being part of the formal educational system. A university library is part of the country's research infrastructure and should therefore not be characterised simply as an educational library, although it does form part of educational practice.

The educational libraries and public libraries actively support people in the acquisition of information and media literacy (IML), which is absolutely crucial in terms of the ability to critically research, review and evaluate information, texts and other media.

Language and Reading Development Among Preschoolers

It is important for children's linguistic development and reading comprehension that they come into contact with picture stories, fairy tales, language games, rhymes and reading aloud at an early age. Even though the preschool is not part of the compulsory schooling system, it does have a curriculum. As most children attend preschool, it should be just as much a matter of course to provide access to stories in various media there, as well as books and reading out loud, as it is to provide access to play and toys. When a small child begins to read, write or tell stories himself or herself, there needs to be inspiration close at hand. Cooperation between preschool educators and children's librarians is of the utmost importance.

The legislation for national minorities and the indigenous Sami has been strengthened with regard to preschool-aged children, and this places greater demands on libraries in terms of the preschool's commitments. Language development in the very youngest children can be supported through various outreach methods. Good results have been reported from initiatives to promote reading and language in which children's librarians paid home visits to new parents, and from other family-supporting activities in collaboration with family centres and Child Health Services in accordance with the Bookstart model. Bookstart is active in several countries and is currently being applied in a number of Swedish municipalities that have received grants from the Swedish Arts Council. To give children a good start in life in terms of language and reading, family-supporting and reading-promoting methods should be strengthened and become sustainable over time.

School Library as a Function

The school needs a school library that is comprehensive, well-financed and integrated with the teaching methods. Every primary school and secondary school pupil must have equal access to a well-functioning school library. Trained librarians, the right equipment and media, appropriate facilities and support from the school administration clearly contribute to better target results among pupils. Well-functioning school libraries are crucial when it comes to promoting teaching parity. Today the country is marred by major differences in terms of access to and the design of school libraries, and this is something that requires urgent action.

A school library is not primarily a collection of books, but part of an educational program in which the librarian is instrumental. School libraries are mandatory according to The Swedish Education Act, and we need to ensure that these provisions increasingly translate into results on the ground. The requirements stipulated by the Swedish Education Act and the curriculum, and those set by the Swedish

Schools Inspectorate's supervisory activities, should be tightened.

According to the curriculum, the school libraries are required to strengthen both pupils' linguistic ability and their digital competence, yet guidance on how to perform information retrieval is still lacking in many schools.

Measurable targets, quality criteria, models and indicators are needed in order to improve and deepen school library activities so that the teaching methods and organisation are conducive to pupils' goal completion. Increased access to trained school librarians is required, as is better collaboration with school administration and teachers. Headmasters' knowledge of how the school library can be integrated with educational practice needs to be strengthened. Examples of indicators that can be meaningful to calculate include the number of pupils per full-time school librarian.

The school librarian's profession also needs to be strengthened at both the local and regional levels through collegial collaboration, training, leadership, mentoring and networks. At present, the requirements and frameworks related to training, libraries, media and culture vary and also differ at the national, regional and municipal levels. The school libraries suffer as a result of these gaps. There is nothing to prevent public libraries from being combined with school libraries, or to prevent a public library from operating out of a nearby school. However, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that the different competences and mandates for public libraries and school libraries, respectively, are maintained.

Collaboration between the school libraries and municipal or regional media centres should be strengthened. The libraries' media supply needs to be expanded with both analog and digital materials. National licenses and shared digital school library services create favourable conditions to even out and grow the school lib-

raries' media collections while increasing their equivalency. This has good potential to succeed in connection with the building of a national digital library. The support provided to the country's school libraries

must be improved through the resource libraries for the national minorities and the indigenous Sami.

All in all, it can be concluded that school libraries are not sufficiently comprehensive, financed or integrated with the schools. This has a detrimental impact on equivalency between schools, and in the long run on society as a whole. The need for action is urgent, especially in the light of accumulated scientific data confirming that student knowledge, learning and education are strengthened by a well-functioning school library.

University and College Libraries

Sweeping changes have been made in Swedish university libraries, and an increasing proportion of media is exclusively available digitally. By coordinating license negotiations for e-resources under the auspices of the "Bibsam" consortium administered by the National Library, it has been possible to effect a digital transformation from printed to digital media.

The libraries are integrated to varying degrees into the teaching and research done by the higher education institutions. Many colleges have been successful in their support for teaching, not least in the case of remote students, where the libraries provide the students with flexible, physical and digital learning environments.

It is common for the library facilities to also offer learning resources such as support for academic writing, language workshops and IT. The university libraries can serve as a role model for other educational libraries.

The link to the secondary school libraries is important for the future college students. Collaboration between university libraries regardless of size is of crucial importance. Smaller university libraries need to be strengthened and be given better and more equivalent access to e-resources, scientific journals and other digital media than is the case today.

The university libraries can be given greater responsibility for participating in the provision of web-based courses adapted to the particular institution's students. The rapidly increasing availability of large-scale, open, web-based courses is placing new demands on selection and quality control, and this is an area where the libraries can make a contribution. In many cases, the university libraries are responsible for the institution's teaching platform, and collaborate closely with the academic development activities.

Adult Education

The adult education provided at Sweden's adult education centres, Komvux and Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), is of great importance to both society at large and to all the individuals who need a new start in working life or education. New arrivals and people with disabilities are important target groups. The adult study associations are also an essential component of lifelong learning. Current library and school legislation does not extend to adult education libraries, and educational providers within the adult education centres, Komvux, SFI and the adult education associations are under no obligation to provide libraries. The adult education system's library activities must be made clear in forthcoming revisions of The Swedish Library Act and the Swedish Education Act so that the municipalities, as the formally responsible bodies, include library services in their adult education procurements.

The libraries in the adult education system should be given a robust overall upgrade as an educational resource for both teachers and students.

We currently lack a comprehensive overview and a unified organisation, which risks leading to students having uneven access to library services. The adult education system's library requirements need to be surveyed and given an overall upgrade. Without resources at their disposal and without the formal mandate to do so, the public libraries have frequently taken on the task of serving as the adult learners' local library resource. The public libraries are already of great importance for both informal and formal learning and are a natural place of study. We need strengthened cooperation between adult education and public libraries, but the issue of resources should be clarified.

The libraries in the adult education system should be given a robust overall upgrade as an educational resource for both teachers and students. Teachers in adult education, be it at the municipal level, in SFI or the adult education centres, need library support and skills development in areas like special needs education, Swedish as a second language and adult education. They need the tools to handle a diverse group of students. Students need access to relevant literature. There is a need for action to improve access to literature, including digital, at the same time as students need more targeted literature. The National Library, together with regional libraries, and the adult education associations, should develop proposals for the possible expansion of libraries in the adult education system, especially in the adult education centres.

Information and Media Literacy

Libraries have an important role to play in terms of strengthening people's information and media literacy (IML). The libraries are continuously developing educational methods to assist both adults and children in how to master, understand and critically scrutinise digital content, and how information searches are influenced

by search engines and algorithms. Digital developments are moving quickly, and in order to maintain and develop in-house knowledge, libraries need to invest in skills development with the aim, hand-in-hand with others, of promoting better information and media literacy.

The teaching of IML needs to be integrated into reading-promoting initiatives involving children's and young adult literature, fiction, non-fiction, audiovisual material and scientific and artistic material, within the framework of an expanded understanding of text. With this as the starting point, the libraries have a crucial role to play in empowering users. The role of libraries must be made visible, clarified and further strengthened, so that people are aware of and are able to benefit from the libraries' educational offerings in the area of IML. ▶

Some Conclusions

Schools needs a school library that is comprehensive, well-financed and integrated with the teaching methods.

Increased access to trained school librarians is required, as is better collaboration with school administration and teachers.

The adult education system's library activities must be made clear in forthcoming revisions to The Swedish Library Act and the Swedish Education Act.

The libraries in the adult education system should be given a robust overall upgrade as an educational resource for both teachers and students.

Smaller university libraries need to be given better and more equal access to e-resources, scientific journals and other digital media than is the case today.

Library activities that provide guidance on how to handle digital tools and evaluate information and sources should be developed and reinforced.

Research

MEANS *Strengthen the libraries as a constituent part of the research infrastructure and enable open access to scientific results from all publicly-funded research*

Introduction

Research libraries are a key part of the research infrastructure. Traditionally, the mission of the libraries has been to provide information: to collect, catalogue and provide information resources for the parent organisation's researchers and students. The research libraries handle digital media, but also have extensive physical collections, especially at the specialised libraries. A comprehensive view of the researchers' needs for these collections is missing at the national level, however. If the research libraries act solely on the basis of their own needs, there is a risk that certain foreign scientific publications will be weeded out. A national plan for long-term access to physical collections needs to be worked out.

Researchers have uneven access to licensed digital resources. Access to periodicals and books in digital form is highly variable depending on which institution or research institute the user is affiliated with. Small, specialised colleges may have just a few thousand publications, whereas the major universities can have up to several hundred thousand. The researcher or investigator unaffiliated with any higher education institution often has difficulty accessing current research publications. This is due to lock-in effects and high licensing costs.

The scientific publishing industry can be described as an oligopoly where the major commercial scientific publishers hold a completely dominant role. The scientific community must gain control over the publication of its own research results and be able to limit the total costs of scientific publishing. The library system must help reverse the present situation whereby the publishers are able to charge for their services multiple times. The research libraries' work with and pursuit of open access is a critical issue for the future of science.

Scientific communication is undergoing an upheaval thanks to digitalisation. The channels for disseminating research results have multiplied. New opportunities have arisen for both producing, searching for and organising scientific information. Libraries can create their own forms of open publishing, with their own publishing houses and editorial committees to provide quality assurance. Scientific publication is one of the main missions of the research libraries, and this mission must now be accorded more scope than ever.

University and College Libraries

The increase in the volume of digital media and the trend toward open science has resulted in new mandates for the university libraries related to research data and support for the strategic development of the higher education institutions.

The libraries' drive to provide the services demanded by the scientific community is strong. Examples of this include responsibility for the higher education institution's publication databases, entering and

quality-assuring data about the publications produced and, based on these metadata, analysing overall publishing activity within the organisation.

In order for the university libraries to adequately perform their role, specific expertise is required of librarians active within the higher education institutions' research environment. University library operations should continue to be integrated into the higher education institutions' research, pursuing the path already charted. The libraries' ability to support researchers must be strengthened.

Support for Research Provided by Specialised Libraries

Advanced research is conducted not only at universities and colleges, but also by government authorities and companies. The specialised libraries and the aggregate information resources at these institutions must be seen as part of the overall research environment. Hospital libraries, government libraries, museum libraries and other specialised libraries also work to make information resources available and to support researchers and the professions in other ways.

The digitalisation of printed material and the conversion of license-based material to open-access material marks an important change. This means that users are no longer limited to accessing information and knowledge through the databases of the physical institutions. The contributions made by the specialised libraries are of great importance in terms of high-quality research, knowledge dissemination and higher education as a whole. The specialised libraries can grow as a resource and a channel for open science, and should collaborate with the university libraries along the lines of the intention set out in The Swedish Library Act. The competences and collections of the publicly-funded specialised libraries must be accessible to all.

Open Science

All obstacles standing in the way of open access to publicly-funded research must be removed. This is a global movement. UNESCO stresses that open access to scientific publications is of fundamental importance for the attainment of the UN's sustainability goals. The Swedish government's stated goal is for all scientific publications and research data produced by publicly-funded research to be instantly openly accessible as soon as possible, but no later than 2026. In line with this goal, all current scientific journals will be migrated from closed subscription-based models to an open-access model, having regard to the different conditions of the various scientific disciplines. This will be done by switching over resources already used for journal subscriptions to supporting sustainable business models for open-access publishing. All stakeholders in scientific publishing should cooperate – especially higher education institutions, research institutes, financiers, libraries and publishers – to ensure a quick and effective transition.

There is great potential in all the research data that is currently locked away. However, the issue of free research data can be problematic from both an ethical and a technical perspective, and this development effort requires significant resources. An important but exceptionally difficult task is the process of collecting and organising research data so that they can be reused by other researchers. The librarians at the research libraries have the expertise needed to perform this task, but need the resources and opportunities to organise and manage the operations involved with open research data. In addition to this, the libraries need to work together closely with other parts of the institution, such as lawyers, IT specialists and archivists.

When research results are openly accessible and no longer locked away behind paywalls, this increases opportunities for all groups in society to access and use the research in their skills development and daily activities. This makes it possible to make decisions on a scientific basis, for example in healthcare and nursing care, and in industry, business and schools. In conjunction with scientific knowledge, an open science system can be used to create tools to counter resistance to knowledge and filter bubbles. ▶

Some Conclusions

The research libraries' work with and pursuit of open access is a critical issue for the future of science.

All obstacles standing in the way of open access to publicly-funded research must be removed.

The library system must help reverse the present situation whereby the publishers are able to charge for their services multiple times.

Scientific publication is one of the main missions of the research libraries, and this mission must now be accorded more scope.

The competences and collections of the publicly-funded specialised libraries must be accessible to all.

An open science system can be used to create tools to counter resistance to knowledge and filter bubbles.

National Digital Library Services

MEANS *Make as much information and literature as possible freely and digitally available to everyone*

Introduction

The digitalisation of library activities is part of the digitalisation of society as a whole, an area in which Sweden is striving to be a world leader. Not only our cultural heritage, but our nation's entire heritage of knowledge, must be digitally available to the entire population as easily and freely as possible. This creates new opportunities for working with the aggregate body of knowledge and new areas of application for the same. In addition to our literary cultural heritage, access is also required to the knowledge found in digitised newspapers, periodicals, audiovisual material, committee investigations and parliamentary publications.

There is no reason for Sweden to lag behind other countries in terms of digital library services. This area requires substantial efforts and a clear plan for Sweden to retake a position that is in line with the country's ambitions and stated goals. In Norway, virtually all books and newspapers in Norwegian are digitally accessible through the national digital library service. Similar developments are underway in many other European countries.

Over a ten-year period, Sweden should digitise most of the material that has been published in the country. This requires a three-track national plan: systems for demand-driven digitalisation, identifying what needs to be preserved, and which collections should be digitised more methodically (such as newspapers). Resources must be mobilised for the libraries' digitalisation efforts at once. Initial one-off measures will be required in order to digitise content. After that, we will require continuous organisation and funding for the administration of technical platforms and rights clearance.

In order to preserve our democratic society, the mental cultivation of our population and scientific research, humanity's aggregate knowledge needs to be accessible, open and processable using common digital services. A person who wishes to look something up today uses one of the commercial search engines on the Internet, but also needs to reach the content of the libraries. The user experience when using library services must be in line with the media market's offerings, as a minimum.

Common Services

Like our Nordic neighbour countries and other countries, Sweden should build common national digital library services adapted for use by different target groups, such as children or national minorities. Digitalisation is the basis for users' advanced access to our cultural heritage and heritage of knowledge. Digitalisation also holds the key to change and the development of the libraries' mandate and role in society.

Digital accessibility is the most crucial issue if the libraries are to retain and increase their relevance among users. Library resources must be made available to the users based on the way they seek knowledge today.

The libraries need to continue to develop their search services and metadata to make their collections accessible. Those who currently perform searches with the help of the libraries have to rely on many different, incompatible databases. Library development must be based on the tools already in place and what the users are already doing. A user perspective must be accorded priority through a national library card that is valid at all of the country's libraries, as well as keyword optimisation, linked data, use of and connection to existing search services, as well as collaborative services such as Wikimedia.

The ambition needs to be for the user to easily be able to access the libraries' resources using a global search function.

The digital library is in the cloud, but the user also has access to the physical library with its collections and activities. Digital guidance such as Ask the Library or Chat with a Librarian leads to both digital and analogue media. Librarians at the physical local library also show the way to shared digital collections. These collections can offer digital or hard copy reading for children and young adults, e-books and audiobooks for adults, as well as digitised literary cultural heritage and knowledge heritage. This includes books, newspapers and periodicals in the national minority languages, a significantly expanded selection of media in the major immigrant languages and digitised cultural heritage in collaboration with other ALM authorities (archives, libraries and museums). This also includes historical radio and television programs, access to research publications and a link to media in the world beyond Sweden.

These ambitions call for a number of actions that will be defined in the section on the duties of the National Library. The

National Library authority can, together with the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (as regards accessibility), be accorded overall responsibility without being the sole implementer and developer. Inclusiveness and broad-based cooperation are preferable.

The libraries need to be part of the whole of society's digitalisation strategy and must also be among the key civil society organisations leading this part of the transition to a new information and knowledge society. The libraries thus also help combat digital exclusion. The libraries must be one of the foremost institutions helping to ensure that humanity's accumulated heritage of knowledge and cultural heritage are digitised, made available and preserved.

Once the collections have been digitised, this creates completely new opportunities in terms of searching for, using and processing the nation's accumulated knowledge. The users need to be able to search for information in a collection by immediately specifying their information requirements using the type of wording that suits them. They need to be able to come into direct contact with information sources without intermediaries or catalogue data, and to get a result right away. This makes the libraries' knowledge models potentially more useful than ever. Once our accumulated cultural heritage and heritage of knowledge have been made digitally accessible, including unstructured data from many sources, this creates completely new possibilities for using self-learning search systems and artificial intelligence to identify patterns and forge new knowledge.

In the near future, it is reasonable to expect that an Internet search will lead the user to knowledge that either comes directly from the libraries' collections, or is packaged by a third party while making reference to the libraries' services in order to boost credibility. This means that the

library system will follow the users and make sure to be where they are, rather than waiting for users to come to the library. The National Library authority should be a unifying source for established, trustworthy knowledge.

Historical Collections

In collaboration with other players, the Swedish Literature Bank has digitised a portion of Swedish literature from the period around the turn of the last century, and is working to promote open access to our literary cultural heritage. The Swedish Literature Bank's development phase is now complete, meaning that the pace of digitalisation could be increased. Permanent government funding is needed to secure its operations.

The radio and television broadcasts that have been preserved since the end of the 1970s need to be accessible throughout the library system. Significant parts of the 20th century's audiovisual cultural heritage, in addition to the programming broadcast on radio and television, also needs to be digitised and made available. The analogue audiovisual collections are currently scattered across various archives, museums and libraries. Large parts of these collections are particularly valuable from a democratic and source criticism perspective, as they reflect what actually happened and what was actually said. When technology makes it possible to manipulate audio and video, the ability to preserve and protect non-manipulable source material becomes invaluable. To preserve the audiovisual cultural heritage of the 20th century, coordination of the preservation mandates of the various cultural heritage institutions is required, and the National Library authority's role needs to be clarified and strengthened.

Many recordings will soon be lost if nothing is done. Some data carriers, such as magnetic tape, have a limited time span for transferring the information they hold,

as the carriers and the playback equipment have a limited service life.

Digitalisation is the only known way to ensure the long-term preservation of the collections threatened by degradation, and to make them available in the long term. Explicit overall and coordinating responsibility for the digitalisation of audiovisual material is required for this reason.

E-books

The differences between the conditions that prevail at the different types of libraries in the field of digital media should be bridged. The public libraries need to catch up with the university libraries when it comes to making digital media available. The public libraries also need to be able to calculate the costs of their e-book lending and overcome their dependence on a single supplier that provides e-books, content, the marketplace as well as infrastructure.

The libraries should be given an opportunity to put the procurement of e-book services out to competitive tender and broaden the range. There is a need for national coordination and funding of e-book procurements for the public libraries and school libraries. The systems are interlinked and require joint ownership and coordinated administration.

The user's privacy must be protected when e-books are borrowed. The libraries must have control over the user data to which service providers have access and which can be used for targeted marketing.

The secrecy requirement that applies to the libraries with regard to individual borrowing of literature must be retained and defended.

Digital Lock-in

Digitised collections should be freely available to users through the libraries to the greatest possible extent. The libraries' resources and archives are intended for the use of the public. Almost all the information that is created today is born in digital

form, including books and periodicals, newspapers and ephemera, as well as audio and video. In the past there was legislation in place and an established practice that enabled dissemination in the form, for example, of interlibrary loans and reproduction in the form of microfilm. The process of digitalisation has resulted in lock-in effects that must be reversed.

Expanded agreements should make it possible to make digitised newspapers and periodicals available at the public libraries as well. This requires a joint negotiating power and libraries consolidating, along with new funding at a national level. The main route of opening access to previously locked-in media should be through negotiations, agreements and remuneration paid to authors. The current digital lock-in, not only of newspapers and periodicals, but also of radio and television programs, needs to be changed to its polar opposite.

Contractual Licenses

The libraries need to pay the copyright holders for use, while upholding the interest in a functioning market. The libraries should have their own, unified negotiating organisation and pricing model for e-books, audiobooks, audiovisual media and web-based media services. The pricing model may entail differentiation between older and newer material, and library users may need to accept a certain sluggishness when borrowing the very latest e-books and audiobooks. The new books that have received cultural or distribution support should be distributed and made available digitally at the time of publication.

Development of National Digital Library Services

The development of new services should take place systematically and in stages. A system is needed for the conversion of the information found in books, newspapers and periodicals from analogue to digital format.

With the support of the entire library system and the entire ALM (archives, libraries and museums) sector, this material must be made searchable and usable by different target groups on common platforms. Rights to the material must be cleared. In an initial round, reading services can be made available to the general public in the form of e-books or audiobooks. Target groups that could be the first to be given access to digitised media in their own languages are the national minorities and the indigenous Sami. The next phase is to gradually open up the digital heritage of knowledge to completely new applications and processing possibilities using AI and other technologies.

A higher degree of joint operation and standardisation is required in order to achieve a high level of quality, innovation and efficiency. Libraries at the local level should not perform duplicate work when joint solutions are better and more cost-effective. There are a number of conceivable components in the libraries' digital infrastructure that could be included in the service(s) provided by a National Library authority. These include a national catalogue, a national library card, a platform for websites, central data storage and framework agreements for licensed content.

In summary, this means that The National Library authority should be given the mandate of developing a new digital library platform for reading for various target groups, of managing operations and supplying the service with content by engaging in procurement and negotiating contractual licenses. It must be possible to integrate the service into the public libraries' activities, and to develop and curate it on a collaborative basis. The National Library authority should also develop digital heritage-of-knowledge services and search functions, and should collect data and make them available to researchers and the general public. Specific needs and

organisational aspects are discussed in greater detail in the commission's report entitled "The Library in the Cloud". ▶

Some Conclusions

Like our Nordic neighbour countries, Sweden should build common national digital library services adapted for use by different target groups.

Over a ten-year period, Sweden should digitise most of the material that has been published in Sweden.

Not only our cultural heritage, but the nation's entire heritage of knowledge in books, newspapers and official publications, must be digitally accessible to the entire population.

The libraries need to be part of the whole of society's digitalisation strategy and must also be one of the key civil society organisations leading the transition to a new information and knowledge society.

The strict secrecy requirement that applies to the libraries with regard to individual borrowing of literature must be defended.

Develop digital heritage-of-knowledge services and search functions to make data available to researchers and the general public.

Common Infrastructure

MEANS *Support and stimulate the public-facing libraries with effective, collaborative national and regional library functions and well-trained librarians*

Introduction

Functioning basic infrastructure in the Swedish library system serves as a guarantee that everyone will have equal access to media, regardless of who they are or where they live. The national and regional levels must serve in a supportive capacity, not a governing one, for the public-facing libraries where the users are. Collaboration across all library types and levels is necessary in order for users to gain access to the media and services they need. All libraries' media collections are made available to users via digital services and interlibrary loans, which also calls for joint ownership and coordinated administration.

Rapidly form a commission to reform and modernise current legal deposit legislation.

Collaboration within and between the various levels of the library system needs to be developed. Authorities throughout the ALM (archives, libraries and museums) sector should strengthen their cooperation for the purpose of addressing common tasks, for example as part of the Digisam collaboration.

Regional libraries need to occupy a position of strength within the cultural collaboration model in order to provide the public libraries with the support they expect and need. Here it is important to proceed on the basis of both the cultural policy objectives and The Swedish Library Act.

Apart from media supply, a robust national library infrastructure can concentrate its efforts on the elements that the libraries have in common and which it is inefficient to develop locally, such as further education and technical systems. Common digital solutions can be used by many libraries. The users expect libraries to communicate with each other and to offer similar services. The technical infrastructure in the library sector is currently fragmented and resource-intensive. More coordinated solutions are needed.

Collaboration must lead to increased efficiency and quality, but should not deprive the principals of their responsibilities or decision-making mandates. The structure of Swedish libraries is specified by The Swedish Library Act and the subdivision of administrative functions. The various libraries' principals are responsible for complying with the laws. They can give their libraries independent mandates.

School libraries and university libraries form part of the respective principal's infrastructure, but are also part of an overall library system. They are links in a chain of educational libraries that support lifelong learning, and play a large role in educational practice and development. The university libraries have the growing task of supporting research, publication and the dissemination of research results.

The National Library as Authority

The authority appointed by the government must have a nationwide overview of the public library system and must promote collaboration within it.
(18 §, Swedish Library Act)

The National Library is not specifically mentioned in The Swedish Library Act. The government decides which authority should be charged with the mandate mentioned in the Act. Today that authority is the National Library of Sweden. The task of supporting the entire public library system in the role of national library needs to be expanded and clarified. The best way to ensure that this expanded mission is performed with efficiency and continuity is to leave it with the existing authority.

Close, trusting cooperation between the national authorities that deal with archival and library issues is needed. Another decisive factor for success is that the various departments that deal with library issues must interact. The possibility of transforming the National Library of Sweden from a director-led authority with an advisory council to a board-supervised public authority should be examined. Broad representation from the ranks of Swedish society, culture and its library world could contribute to greater transparency and appropriate governance. Although the government appoints a particular authority to serve as the National Library authority, not all services need to be provided within this authority. Tasks can be procured on the market or delegated to different collaborative groups of libraries, or nodes for specific tasks.

Possible tasks for the National Library authority

Development of Metadata Use and Libris

Metadata are important components of the library infrastructure. Access to good metadata is necessary for collection building, search, preservation and the dissemination of information. Metadata also play a key role in collaborative endeavours between cultural institutions and in contacts with external players, such as publishers and Wikimedia.

Create a sustainable, unified structure for continuous skills development in the librarian profession through the establishment of an independent institution for the further education of librarians.

The National Library is responsible for the national database Libris. All libraries should be able to participate in the this cooperation. Libris makes the libraries' media content visible through metadata that are free and shareable. Collaboration within Libris is to be run and coordinated in a way that is effective for all parties. The metadata field is now seeing strong growth as a natural consequence of the digitalisation of society and the media. The manual effort involved in description needs to be reduced in favor of reusing metadata that the producers already have.

Cutting-edge technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and more automated processes, can help make the creation and management of metadata significantly more efficient than is the case today. The National Library authority must coordi-

nate and pursue this development work, either under its own auspices or through procurement(s). The work will require training activities and support for agreements and licensing.

Grants

Grants for the operation and development of common library services should be allocated by the National Library authority. The national authority should be able to give regional libraries and municipal libraries responsibilities and resources for the development of national solutions that can be enjoyed by all. It should be possible for successful services that were developed locally to become available nationally through strong local nodes, government funding or the formation of consortia. For example, the library authority can give mandates and provide resources to one or more municipal libraries for a national digital service for children.

The National Library authority must be able to allocate and follow up on grant funds for the sake of long-term, strategic library development. Similar development funds are at a considerably higher level in the other Nordic countries than in Sweden, which should converge with the Nordic level. The authority should have special appropriations for providing funding to research and development where the professions are.

Common Digital Library Services

The web platform must be the responsibility of the National Library authority, as must technical development, negotiation and licensing. The authority should:

- be responsible for developing or making available a universal search function for reaching the libraries' resources
- by working side-by-side with other archival, library and museum authorities, prioritise and establish a plan for, and be responsible for the large-scale

digitalisation activities required in order to digitise Sweden's entire heritage of knowledge and cultural heritage
- be responsible for developing, funding and managing the operation of the various technical platforms needed for different user groups
- be responsible for negotiations with authors' organisations in order to make its own digital collections available to library users, and negotiate rights to databases, e-books, audiovisual and streaming services for the entire public library system
- negotiate contractual licenses in order to make The National Library's digitised media collections available using new state funding

Library law

There is a need for library law guidance and support for the entire library system. This should be accomplished through the National Library authority without depriving the respective principals of their formal responsibilities. There is currently no unified library-specific legal competence to serve as a support for issues relating to freedom of expression and copyright, or other legal issues related to the library sector. This means that libraries that seek advice from different judicial bodies act in different ways, even when the question at issue is the same. The result is insecurity, differential treatment and difficulty defining lessons learned.

National Resource Libraries and Lending Centres

According to The Swedish Library Act, there must be one or more lending centres. These serve as support resources for all public-facing libraries. The National Library is responsible for the lending centres, of which there are currently two:

- The Swedish Repository Library and Centre for Interlibrary Loans

● The International Library.

These are activities that should be developed and strengthened, not least with a consultative approach.

The national minorities' libraries and the indigenous Sami libraries should be given special mandates as resource libraries within their respective language areas so that they can provide support in the areas of media supply, advice and expertise. Depository libraries and lending centres should be coordinated consultatively with the national minorities' and the indigenous Sami's resource libraries.

Further Education and Skills Development
The National Library authority must collaborate with the regional libraries and universities and colleges as regards education and research in the field of library and information science. The aim is to optimise services within the framework of a strong national structure for further education and skills development.

Evaluation and Follow-up
The National Library authority is responsible for maintaining Sweden's official library statistics for publicly-funded libraries, tracking the groups prioritised by The Swedish Library Act in particular. According to the Reading Delegation, in the future it will be appropriate to have a clear addressee at the national level who can take action if the statistics were to show, for example, that children and young people lack equivalent access to library services. In collaboration, the National Library authority, the regional libraries and the municipalities also monitor how the statutory library plans are structured and used pursuant to 18 §, Swedish Library Act. The lending statistics is a weak indicator of people's actual library use, and the National Library should initiate research on the effects of reading. The National Library authority should be responsible for performing continuous, transparent business intelligence to track

developments domestically and internationally throughout the library system. This analysis should also include regular follow-up of the National Strategy for Libraries, with measurable goals and proposals for action and possible reforms.

Regional Libraries

A strong, mobilised base of regional libraries can play a decisive role and be critically important in terms of development and support for public libraries and other library services. Today's regional libraries exhibit differences in terms of resources and working methods that may be the result of the regions differing in terms of population and geography.

This means that the work needs to be set up in different ways, and that the municipalities may have differing needs for support. But the differences may also be due to different priorities. From a national perspective, it is critical for the regional support provided to the libraries to be equivalent, and for that support to be based on the needs of the public libraries.

The regional libraries are included in the cultural collaboration model. In order for the operations to be robust and equivalent, it is necessary for the principals to take responsibility for continued development and sufficient resource allocation. Regional library services should be linked to possible future changes in the regional subdivision of administration.

The mandate of the regional libraries may include skills and method development, digital inclusiveness, reading promotion, media supply, multilingual operations, library service and collaboration. The regional libraries should form part of an overall structure for further education together with The National Library and the universities that provide library and information science programs.

Municipalities and regions have a natural and important role to play in civil defence and total defence planning. It is

important to take into account the ability of regional and municipal libraries to contribute to the defence of democracy in continued total defence planning.

The Public-facing Libraries

The National Library authority and the regional libraries have a clear mandate to act in a support capacity for the public-facing libraries, i.e. those who encounter the users in various ways.

The *public library* is the largest, most frequented and most widespread municipal cultural institution, meaning that it contributes to a vibrant and attractive society. Many public libraries enjoy the status of local cultural centre. The municipalities are the principals and there must be public libraries in all municipalities. Large differences between different public libraries are allowed. Because the operations need to be characterised by local identity and local needs, these differences are positive.

Municipal autonomy is important, as is the financing principle, but the *differences* must not lead to *non-equivalent* library services. Medium-sized and small municipalities with failing tax bases need support to be able to offer good library services. Small library units are becoming increasingly dependent on collaboration and increased digitalisation to be able to provide an equivalent range of media and services.

The Swedish Library Act extends to public libraries, school libraries, the regional libraries, university libraries, lending centres and the libraries referred to collectively in the Act as *other publicly-funded libraries*. These other *specialised libraries* are an important part of the library system.

Other publicly-funded libraries include libraries at government agencies. What characterises several of these libraries is that they are usually both inward-facing (towards the agency), and outward-facing (towards external users). The principals must have a clearly defined responsi-

bility for the existence of the collections. This way the specialised libraries and their collections will not run the risk of disappearing. Unique source material is frequently found in these libraries, and the specialised libraries' collections should be included in a national preservation plan. The specialised libraries are a resource for research and lifelong learning, and are constituent parts in an overall national library context. Their operations should be governed by the relevant authority's instructions or appropriation directions.

There are several *specialised libraries in the music field*. These can be institutional libraries at a college or adult education centre with a focus on music. It is neither efficient nor meaningful for all public libraries to have their own large collections of sheet music and printed music to meet the needs of the local music scene.

The National Library authority needs a clear mandate to support the entire library system with infrastructure, legal services, metadata, competence, development, research support and help with grants.

Interlibrary lending of sheet music and printed music should therefore be efficient, so that the users can access this sought after type of media. Access to librarian expertise with a focus on music is needed in the public library system.

Prison libraries are libraries at correctional institutions. Inmates need equivalent access to libraries from one prison to another. This calls for development of the operations and the range of available multilingual media and accessible media.

Correctional officers need access to information and scientific publications in their discipline.

In many cases, the *hospital libraries* have a dual mandate. First, to provide healthcare professionals with the best available knowledge and current scientific publications, so that patients will receive high-quality evidence-based care on equal terms. Second, to provide patients with general literature and information about their own diagnoses. Equivalence of access must be reinforced. Knowledge support for all healthcare professionals should be provided through joint licenses and open science.

The need for equivalent access to scientific results is significant in the healthcare sector. Thanks to its core offering of e-resources, joint procurement by county councils and regions guarantees access to e-journals, e-books and more by all county council employees and private contractors working on behalf of the county councils. In practice, municipal health services usually lack access of this type. Equivalence of access is ultimately a matter of patient safety, meaning that special efforts based on the proposals found in the inquiries carried out to date are urgently required.

Media Supply

All library users are entitled to help in getting the media they need, whether for research purposes, studies, informal education or general reading. But all books and media cannot be present everywhere at once, which means that the libraries need to collaborate.

Equal access to both physical media and e-media served within the entire library system must be secured. A lot of money is currently being spent on acquiring e-media, but the physical collections are also very large. The legal deposit libraries have the largest collections, while the specialised libraries own collections that are unique.

Equal access to information and media can either be secured through a shared commitment for the entire library system or through interlibrary lending compensation. For public libraries, support measures are currently provided in the form of regional collaborations related to catalogue and transport arrangements. These have led to a higher level of self-sufficiency within the libraries' own regions. Government support for mainly public libraries is provided in the form of lending centres. For research libraries, government support is provided in the form of compensatory funds.

Interlibrary loans need to become more user-driven and need to be effectuated more quickly, with options for direct home delivery. The library system should be able to match the capabilities of modern e-commerce. A logistically modern, efficient and advanced depository system at the national level needs to be looked into and further considered by the National Library authority. It should be possible to deliver legal deposit copies to the depositories as well. A modern depository or lending centre could facilitate interlibrary loans, and could be a larger resource for the educational libraries than is the case today.

Creating a clear national responsibility for common media supply will be an infrastructural challenge. The research and specialised libraries in particular are in need of a collaboration related to physical collections. This calls for a joint framework for title weeding, a survey of special collections based on the respective focus areas of the research libraries, and a solution for storage. The role of the depository library can then be part of this framework. The digital preservation formats require periodic updates. A nationwide security plan needs to be drafted, covering both the digital and the physical collections.

Reformed Legal Deposit Legislation

The current legal deposit legislation needs to be reformed so that it provides the support and tools needed in order to document our era for the sake of the future. A commission should be formed, in line with the proposal presented in the 2018 National Library report entitled *Plikten under lupp!* (Legal Deposit under the Spotlight!), with a mandate to prepare and propose a revision of the legal deposit legislation, taking into account the current and future media landscape. The starting point for such a revision must be that the material collected should be independent of format and medium, and that accessibility to the material should be improved.

New delimitations and methods for collecting electronic material need to be formulated. Developments in the publishing field have resulted in a situation where significant parts of the media landscape are no longer subject to the legal deposit legislation. The current legal deposit library system does not make use of the opportunities inherent in the digital evolution. This is anachronistic and resource-intensive. The material published on social media needs to be preserved in order to capture the entirety of contemporary discourse.

The legal deposit deliveries of printed copies to seven legal deposit libraries need to be revised, and the extensive title weeding performed at the time of delivery must be reduced. There are significant streamlining gains and savings to be had by implementing digital deliveries. Newspapers, periodicals and other printed matter should also be supplied to the legal deposit recipients in the form of electronic originals. The legislator should update and merge the two legal deposit laws that are on the books today. The ordinance on the processing of personal data in the National Library's digital cultural heritage projects is also in need of a revision. In order to increase efficiency and avoid duplication of work, the collections of Swedish children's literature held by the Swedish Institute for Children's Books and those held by the legal deposit libraries should also be reviewed.

The collection of legal deposit copies of audiovisual media and the process of making them available should also be included in the legislative review. The current legislation only covers physical items and not data files, and must therefore be modernised. A new law governing legal deposit copies should contain provisions mandating the best possible technical quality of the deliveries. Legal deposit deliveries of the subtitles and metadata already available for the programs can dramatically increase the usability and accessibility of the saved programs. When modern technology makes it possible to manipulate audio and video, unadulterated audio and video recordings become invaluable as source material. The legal deposit legislation should also include digital games and digital teaching materials.

Many recordings will soon be lost if nothing is done. Because data carriers and playback equipment for such material have a limited service life, there is also a limited time span for the actual transfer of the information content. Explicit overall and coordinating responsibility for the digitalisation of audiovisual material is required for this reason. In this context, the collaboration between archives, museums and libraries in general must be improved in order to avoid duplication of work. In their joint report entitled *Digitalisering av audiovisuella samlingar* ("Digitalisation of Audiovisual Collections"), the National Library and the Swedish Film Institute present proposals for how the National Library, acting in conjunction with the Swedish National Archives, among others, should be given the mandate of concretely specifying the prerequisites for coordinating such a digitalisation effort within the archival, library and museum sector. These proposals should be implemented.

Library and Information Science

The foundation of the librarian's professional competence is laid within the framework of the academic discipline of library and information science. This is also the case internationally. A structurally well-developed and substantively relevant library and information science curriculum is critically important if the librarian profession is to be able to meet the demands of The Swedish Library Act.

This is why further education is also needed, so that librarians can keep their education systematically and progressively up-to-date. A clear competence ladder for professional librarians can be used to update specialist expertise and make it visible. A sustainable, unified structure for continuous skills development within the librarian profession therefore needs to be created. This can be done by establishing an independent institution for the further education of librarians (Bofi) based on the model used for other occupational groups. The librarians also need knowledge from other areas, such as IT, communications and education. There is room in the labor market for more graduates in library and information science.

The library and information science programs are provided at a bachelor's and master's level. Education and research in this discipline are currently carried out at five higher education institutions in Sweden. A sixth program will be set up shortly. There is a shortage of librarians. Providing libraries with qualified librarians is therefore a critical, urgent issue that must be solved. More students need to be admitted at various levels of the librarian training program. Opportunities for increased cultural and linguistic diversity in the student groups need to be improved.

Targeted governmental appropriations should be changed from temporary grants to more general and permanent appropriations for library development and research.

There is a need to increase the funding provided for research in library and information sciences, with a clear focus on library services, as well as the expertise and professionalism of librarians. Research-level training in library and information science is important in order to develop both the educational programs and the research conducted within this professional field. A national research institute for library research should be funded and established by collaborating higher education institutions. A collaborative council for educational, research and further education issues in the library sector should be established in order to reinforce mutual exchange of experiences as between the library science program and the librarian profession. These proposals are elaborated on specifically in the report entitled *Profession, Utbildning, Forskning* ("Profession, Education, Research").

Research and development

Short-term project funding can initially serve as a creative support to spur change and development. But in order to be sustainable, new forms of funding, implementation and operation of successful efforts and initiatives are required.

Targeted governmental appropriations should be changed from temporary grants to more general and permanent appropriations for library development and research. Using such appropriations, the National Library authority can initiate research

and development that can then be made permanent in the long term. It is urgent to establish a research program with a focus on the library sector in flux. The purpose of the grants must be to ensure sustainable development of services over time – nationally, regionally and locally. The allocation of government grants should strike a balance between infrastructure investments on the one hand and local development of services on the other. Examples of infrastructure investments within the digitalisation area include common platforms and digitalisation of content as well as research. Local development can consist of training initiatives for library staff and development of services based on local needs.

Local service development must be rooted in a local context and in a local needs analysis. In order to support the local needs analysis and to make it equivalent across geographies, the National Library authority should develop a national needs analysis support tool to be used when applying for grants. The library authority must be an active coordinator for development and long-term sustainability for the infrastructure investments.

A vibrant National Strategy for Libraries that is continuously followed up on, and which leads to higher-level strategic reforms of the Swedish library system can contribute to a stronger democracy with a population that is knowledgeable, educated and engaged. This is a great opportunity for the Swedish libraries to take a leap into the future. ▶

Some Conclusions

Rapidly form a commission to reform and modernise current legal deposit legislation.

Create a sustainable, unified structure for continuous skills development in the librarian profession through the establishment of an independent institution for the further education of librarians.

A logistically modern, efficient and advanced depository system at the national level needs to be considered.

The National Library authority needs a clear mandate to support the entire library system with infrastructure, legal services, metadata, competence, development, research support and help with grants.

The Swedish Literature Bank's operations should be should be secured through government funding.

The library and information science programs need to increase their admissions. Opportunities for increased cultural and linguistic diversity in the student groups need to be improved.

There is a need to increase the funding provided for research, with a clear focus on library services, as well as the expertise and professionalism of librarians.

Targeted governmental appropriations should be changed from temporary grants to more general and permanent appropriations for library development and research.

The National Library authority should be made responsible for regularly following up on the National Strategy for Libraries, with measurable goals and proposals for action and possible reforms.

Appendix

THE ART OF WRITING
A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Sweden is finally on its way to getting a National Strategy for Libraries. A strategy, moreover, that applies to the entire public library system. Like many other countries, not least the Nordic ones, this means that Sweden will have a strategy that shows the way forward. At the same time, the very concept of a national strategy is complex and enigmatic. What is a national strategy? For example, what is its constitutional, legal nature? Who makes the decisions? How will it be implemented? It is neither a piece of legislation nor an agency instruction nor a budgetary decision, but it is nevertheless a document meant to provide guidance and to set a direction for an entire sector of society.

In 2015, The National Library of Sweden, KB, received the government's mandate to prepare a proposal for a National Strategy for Libraries. The mandate from the government and the Ministry of Culture appeared to be clear, in theory. In practice though, a national strategy is what you make of it.

But what it ends up being depends of course on how it came about. There is a substantial and extensive body of policy-making behind KB's government mandate. Back in 2008, Svensk biblioteksförening (the Swedish Library Association), the DIK trade union, Författarförbundet (the Swedish Authors' Federation) and föreningen Sveriges länsbibliotekarier (the Association of Swedish County Librarians) demanded a new Swedish national library

policy in a joint campaign called "Library lovers". In a multi-point program, the group demanded, among other things, digital library services, skills development, investments in reading among young people and a national strategy.

Library issues were highlighted in the 2009 cultural inquiry and bill entitled *Tid för kultur* ("Time for Culture"), which led, among other things, to KB being tasked with a government mandate in 2011 to be responsible for "national overview and collaboration". The Swedish Library Act was revised in 2014. It is worth noting that this effort was led by a Minister of Culture affiliated with the Moderate party, whereas the Minister of Culture who awarded KB the mandate of developing a national strategy in 2015 was affiliated with the Green party. Library issues are not a partisan matter in Swedish politics. There is strong support for the libraries from the right end of the spectrum to the left.

At the same time, national strategies have become the new buzzword in Swedish politics and public administration. There are lots of national strategies: The Bicycle Strategy, the Security Strategy, the Dementia Strategy, the Digitalisation Strategy, etc. Many of them are full of imprecise and benevolent phrases about what ought to happen. But who is to do what, once the strategy has been formulated and adopted?

One way for a government to prepare a decision is to conduct a rapid internal inquiry in the government offices and to draft a ministerial memorandum with a proposal. But historically, the most common way in Sweden, with its plethora of

government inquiries, is for the government to form a public inquiry when they want something done or something changed. This way of thinking and building consensus has become part of the Swedish model. Either the government appoints a solo investigator who draws on expert resources to come up with the best possible proposals – with the inevitable political compromises occurring afterwards in the political process. Or the alternative is to form a parliamentary inquiry with representatives from the political parties – who draw on expert assistance to survey the facts – which then reaches a compromise in committee so that it is able to present an already negotiated, well-prepared proposal around which there is a consensus. In terms of form, every public inquiry is its own authority that is able to work with a large degree of independence but is still required to adhere to certain formal requirements, not least when it comes to proposals that cost money. The directives often mention that the proposals must not cost anything, or that they must have a specified source of funding.

But the inquiry regarding a national strategy was much more open-ended in terms of form, as the constitutional nature of strategies is unclear. So for better or for worse, the mandate's form gave us investigators a significant amount of latitude, which initially led to confusion.

The mandate to formulate a National Strategy for Libraries was not a public inquiry and not a ministerial memorandum, but rather a government mandate awarded to KB as an agency.

In other words, this entailed significant latitude in terms of working methods and form, with no restrictions regarding cost-driving proposals. Not only that, the mandate was of uncharacteristically long duration, almost 4 years. Which was almost torture for an old news hound like me, who is used to having things ready for the lunchtime public radio broadcast or the 9 o'clock evening news.

My main qualification for the assignment is that I am not a librarian and that I have not worked with libraries. I am an author and a journalist with 50 years of experience in public service radio and television broadcasting, as a news reporter – both a general reporter and a special reporter – as a supervisor, and eventually as managing news editor for Swedish national radio. I later worked as a political reporter and commentator in television news and as the managing editor of a live politics channel under the SVT umbrella. My most recent assignment was as CEO of one of the three Swedish public service companies – Utbildningsradion UR.

Conceptually, there are strong links between public service radio and television and the library system, in the form of their mutual ambition to provide the population with knowledge and education so that they can operate in society. But the mandates differ and they are worlds apart. An inquiry into a National Strategy for Libraries must be free of the library world's various interests and coteries. It is a small industry where everyone knows everyone else and where everyone has often completed the same university education.

In particular, the investigator in charge must be seen as independent in relation to KB, the authority awarded the mandate to conduct the inquiry. So National Librarian Gunilla Herdenberg was looking for someone from the outside who would still be capable of coming up with insider insights. I had just stepped down from my post as CEO of UR, and was tempted by the possibility of contributing in an important area while also learning something new. I accepted the assignment and we recruited a secretariat with two experienced investigators who possessed good knowledge of and insights into the library world. The assignment wore on for a long time. Original members of the secretariat gradually gave way to others, and our work was supplemented by a number of experts.

Before we could start sketching out proposals and preparing drafts of a strategy, we had to conduct a proper description of reality and a proper external analysis. We therefore invited the entire Swedish library system to participate in describing the status quo of Swedish libraries today. Practically speaking, we were engaged on several fronts. One was a more unconventional approach to social media. We created a Facebook group for a National Strategy for Libraries and invited the entire industry to freely contribute their views, insights and knowledge. Each week, we posed different questions that were discussed by the Facebook group, which quickly amassed over 1,000 members.

We also invited researchers, library managers and other experts to share their views, experiences and above all, their analyses. Formal requirements were loose, but their contributions had to be in writing. We made use of a working method found in the Swedish foreign service, according to which ambassadors regularly compose a private, analytical and reflecting letter to the Foreign Minister about the conditions in the country they are monitoring. These handwritten ministerial letters, which must always open with Mr Minister (or Madam Minister where applicable) and conclude with "With reverence" are, despite their formal introduction and conclusion, quite free in terms of form, and give the knowledgeable ambassador an opportunity to mix factual information with sincere personal reflections, pure gossip and sterling analysis. Of course, these Dispatches, as they are called, are strictly confidential, but they are very valuable precisely because they give a knowledgeable and insightful ambassador the opportunity to present his or her knowledge and analyses without the burden of formal requirements or citations.

We asked 50 or so "ambassadors" in the library world to formulate such dispatches – and we received incredibly valuable and useful material in response. These responses, in conjunction with the posts, questions and discussions on Facebook, gave us what we needed to draft an initial status report. It was an inside-out description of the conditions in the Swedish library world. We picked out plenty of comments and quotations from dispatches and Facebook posts, and published the report digitally under the apposite name of Status Report. This provided a basis for continued discussion and ideas for more specific reports. To make progress from there, we therefore commissioned a number of researchers, librarians and authors to write background reports. In total, the inquiry published 14 different reports. Several of these related to the school libraries, which required particular emphasis according to our directives. One important conclusion drawn by the special studies on school libraries was that properly equipped libraries housed in suitable premises and having trained librarians will allow the pupils to better reach their goals:

Skolbibliotekets roll för elevers lärande. En forsknings- och kunskapsöversikt år 2010–2015. ("The School Library's Roll for Student Learning. A research and knowledge overview for 2010-2015") (April 2017)

Lägesrapport i maj 2016. Kungliga bibliotekets arbete med en nationell biblioteksstrategi. ("Status Report May 2016. The National Library's work with a national strategy for libraries") (May 2016)

Värdet av skolbibliotek. En verksamhet för hållbar utbildning och bildning. ("The Value of a School Library. A function for sustainable education and learning") (March 2019)

We also published several reports touching on multilingualism and the national minorities:

Migration och språklig mångfald. Bibliotekens roll i det flerspråkiga samhället. ("Migration and Linguistic Diversity. The library's role in a multi-lingual society") (Oct 2017)

Biblioteken och de nationella minoritetsspråken. En lägesbeskrivning. ("The Library and National Minority Languages. A description of the situation") (March 2018)

Kliv fram! Bibliotek, segregation och integration. ("Step up! Library, segregation and integration") (April 2018)

In a separate expert seminar and report, we highlighted the role of children:

Behöver biblioteken barnen – eller är det barnen som behöver bibliotek? ("Do Libraries Need Children – or is it the children who need libraries?") (April 2018).

In another report, we highlighted how the hierarchical positioning of the libraries and the library managers in the principal's organisation affects both development and opportunities to exert influence:

Bibliotek i centrum eller i periferin? Hur chefer uppfattar bibliotekets organisatoriska placering och andra faktorer för att få genomslag. ("Library in the Center or in the Periphery? How managers perceive the library's organisational placement and other impact factors") (Nov 2016)

At a meeting held for all of Sweden's library science programs, the idea was born of a joint study on the professional curriculum and the needs of and developments within the field of library research. This turned into a unique collaboration between the five universities and colleges that train librarians:

Profession, Utbildning, Forskning. Biblioteks- och informationsvetenskap för en stärkt bibliotekarieprofession. ("Profession, Education, Research. Library and information science for a stronger library profession") (April 2018)

A large external analysis composed by a host of authors was conducted in the report entitled Den femte statsmakten (The Fifth Branch of Government), in which we highlighted the democratic role of the libraries using a metaphor drawn from the chairman of the Danish Library Managers' Association. If the legislative branch is the first, the executive the second and the judiciary the third, it can be said that the libraries are the fifth branch of government if we refer to the free press as the fourth branch. This perspective resonated and was met with understanding. It was published partly in writing, but also digitally with further annexes.

Den femte statsmakten. Bibliotekens roll för demokrati, utbildning, tillgänglighet och digitalisering. ("The Fifth Branch of Government. The libraries role for democracy, education, accessibility and digitalisation") (Sep 2017)

Den femte statsmakten. Bibliotekens roll för demokrati, utbildning, tillgänglighet och digitalisering. Bilaga. ("The Fifth Branch of Government. The libraries role for democracy, education, accessibility and digitalisation. Appendix") (Sep 2017)

The last report submitted by the inquiry took its name from the Dutch national library strategy. They referred to the digital libraries as the "Library in the sky," and that was also made the title of the report in which we conduct an international comparison and attempt to specify what a national digital library can be:

Biblioteket i skyn. En nationell digital bibliotekstjänst. ("Library in the Clouds. A national digital library service") (March 2019)
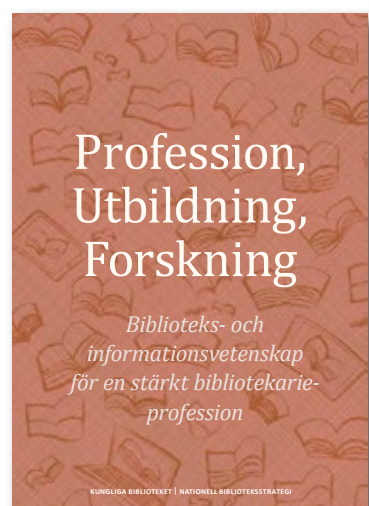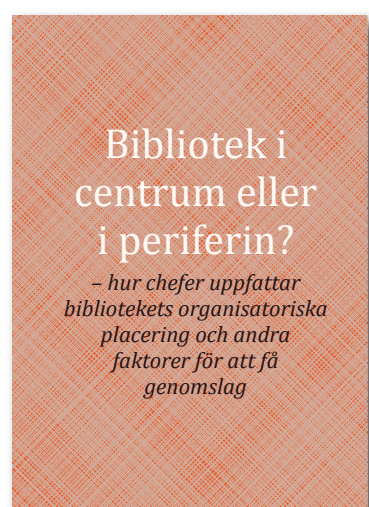
A clear conclusion drawn by this report is that Sweden is lagging behind its Nordic neighbours and many other comparable countries when it comes to digital library services. This in spite of the fact that the government's IT policy objective is for Sweden to be the "best in the world" when it comes to digital development. This therefore became an important basis for the report.

In order to enable a real discussion of the inquiry's reasoning throughout the library system, we summarised our proposals into a Draft strategy in May 2017.

Från ord till handling. På väg mot en nationell biblioteksstrategi. Utkast. ("From words to actions. Towards a national strategy for libraries. Draft") (May 2017)

This draft was presented at a live-streamed library conference in Kalmar. In the draft we attempted to capture the obstacles and threats, as well as the challenges, opportunities and problems, faced by the libraries. Based on this, we sketched out possible actions, costs and responsibilities.

This draft ended up involving the country's entire library community. Now there was something concrete to leverage, and the draft did meet with criticism and objections. Which was exactly the point. The reactions gave us opportunities to rework and improve the proposal. In October 2017, we, with the help of the regional libraries, organised five dia-

Skol-bibliotekets roll för elevers lärande

En forsknings- och kunskapsöversikt år 2010–2015

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Migration och språklig mångfald

Bibliotekens roll i det flerspråkiga samhället

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Behöver biblioteken barnen

– eller är det barnen som behöver bibliotek?

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Lägesrapport i maj 2016

Kungliga bibliotekets arbete med en nationell biblioteksstrategi

Biblioteken och de nationella minoritets-språken

En lägesbeskrivning

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Bibliotek i centrum eller i periferin?

– hur chefer uppfattar bibliotekets organisatoriska placering och andra faktorer för att få genomslag

Värdet av skolbiblioteket

En verksamhet för hållbar utbildning och bildning

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Kliv fram!

Bibliotek, segregation och integration

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

Profession, Utbildning, Forskning

Biblioteks- och informationsvetenskap för en stärkt bibliotekarie-profession

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

**Den femte
statsmakten**

*Bibliotekens roll för
demokrati, utbildning,
tillgänglighet och
digitalisering*

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

**Från ord
till handling**

*På väg mot en
nationell biblioteksstrategi*

UTKAST

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

**Den femte
statsmakten**

*Bibliotekens roll för
demokrati, utbildning,
tillgänglighet och
digitalisering*

BILAGA

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

**Demokratins
skattkammare**

*Förslag till en
nationell biblioteksstrategi*

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

**Biblioteket
i skyn**

*Nationella digitala
bibliotekstjänster*

KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET | NATIONELL BIBLIOTEKSSTRATEGI

logue conferences held throughout the country, from top to toe. With the draft as a basis, hundreds of participants contributed suggestions for changes and improvements. All of this led to a wide-ranging reformulation of the proposal, with changed target areas, a changed structure and new formulations. As a result, the final proposal gained a significant amount of buy-in.

Throughout the course of the work on the strategy, we have strived to contribute to the narrative of what a library is by publishing films that portray various aspects of library services. Eight shorts portrayed public libraries, school libraries, hospital libraries, research libraries, libraries for the national minorities and for the major immigrant groups, as well as library services for people with different types of disabilities. The films provide a concrete picture of modern library services in various areas. The political world is not immune to cultivating a nostalgic image of libraries as a kind lady who lends out books that smell good. In order for the libraries to be able to take the leap into the future, something needs to happen, and even more so within the libraries.

In order to highlight the role played by libraries in a democratic society, we made a short entitled "den femte statsmakten (the fifth branch of government)," drawing inspiration from the United States, in particular from Tony Marx of the New York Public Library.

The publication of the final report coincided with the premiere of our one-hour documentary entitled "Jakten på Selma Lagerlöf och en nationell biblioteksstrategi (The Hunt for Selma Lagerlöf and a National Strategy for Libraries)". A group of prominent librarians at the University Library of Uppsala was given the mandate of tracking down everything they could about the Swedish author and Nobel laureate in libraries and archives all over the world. During their search, they con-

stantly ran into the same obstacles that are highlighted by the strategy, such as a lack of coordination, difficulties related to copyright, the oligopoly of the major scientific publishers, the lag in digitisation, and so on. This is how the film portrays the need for a national library strategy and what needs to be done. This documentary is also available with English subtitles on kb.se. Several of the shorts have also been translated into Finnish.

Naturally, all reports and all materials are also available for download from kb.se, in many cases also in e-pub format. The final report is also available as an audio book in Swedish.

An important part of this effort has thus been to contribute to an ongoing narrative about the libraries, and to do so with the greatest possible transparency. Several of the presentations made in the various proposals and reports have been filmed and streamed online. All of the reports also had a uniform graphic design, with the same illustrator and designer.

The national security strategy served as an inspiration in terms of its form and structure. It addresses a large and complex policy area, and does so in only 25 pages. We therefore said at an early stage that the libraries cannot possibly be more complex than the entire field of national security. It was decided that the final proposal for a National Library Strategy must not be any more extensive than the national security strategy. This is a political document that is meant to be read and used. It was not easy to be concise, but our proposal nonetheless ended up being exactly 25 pages long.

The inquiry was commissioned by Green party Minister for Culture and Democracy, Alice Bah Kuhnke, and was due for submission by 1 March 2019. Sweden held parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2018, and forming a government turned out to be complicated. For several months, Sweden had a caretaker government with a partly limited mandate. But Sweden got

a new government after the new year; a red-green coalition, like the previous one, with the support of the Liberals and the Centre Party in the Riksdag. The Minister of Culture is still from the Green Party – Amanda Lind. She asked to receive the proposal on 7 March. Thus, the submission of the proposal for a National Library Strategy ended up being one of her first major political events.

When you read the proposal, some of the things it says can seem quite obvious. The vision follows from The Swedish Library Act:

Libraries for everyone

The goal is democracy

A democratic society in which everyone can freely access the world's collected literature and knowledge, in order to be able to operate in society on their own terms

To get there, we define six working areas, or means:

Society's Open Spaces

Use the libraries as society's open spaces for mental cultivation, experiences and conversations.

Reading

Inspire reading experiences, increase everyone's reading and language comprehension and strengthen the place of literature.

Learning

Develop the population's opportunities for lifelong learning and free opinion formation by means of a coherent chain of educational libraries.

Research

Strengthen the libraries as a constituent part of the research infrastructure and enable open access to scientific results from all publicly-funded research.

National Digital Library Services

Make as much information and literature as possible freely and digitally available to everyone.

Common Infrastructure

Support and stimulate the public-facing libraries with effective and collaborative national and regional library functions and well-trained librarians.

But what may appear self-evident at the time of submission was anything but on the way there. What we set out in the proposal ties into IFLA's (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and many other countries' target documents and strategies, but there are still items that have been worked out in a Swedish context and are not merely a translation of what others have already done. The strategy proposal is just that – a strategic text – but we need concrete measures here and now in order for it to develop into a reality. The draft strategy was even subtitled "From words to action". In the final document, we separated the strategic text from the concrete proposals for reform, and put them in a special letter to the government. The idea was to facilitate the handling of the matter from a policy perspective. It is the government that resolves on the strategy, but the Riksdag has the power to enact decisions regarding reforms that need to be included in the budget. Based on the strategic pro-

posals and the strategy's target areas, we therefore formulated a reform package with "six strategic reforms for stronger libraries".

SIX STRATEGIC REFORMS FOR STRONGER LIBRARIES

STRONGER SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Establish a national knowledge centre for school library issues to provide skills development to all staff groups that come into contact with the school library area in their professions. Strengthen media supply and access to e-media for the school libraries by means of the common national digital library services.
Total SEK 50 million

STRENGTHEN LIBRARIES FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The libraries of the indigenous Sami and the national minorities are given mandates and resources to act as resource libraries for their language areas. This includes support for media supply and the distribution of media in the national minority languages.
Total SEK 40 million

STRONGER MULTILINGUAL LIBRARY SERVICES

Coordinate national media supply for people with a mother tongue other than Swedish. This reinforcement concerns both increased media supply and skills development in order to facilitate the libraries' mission of meeting priority groups' needs.
Total SEK 20 million

STRONGER NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES

The National Library authority is given the mandate of developing a new digital library platform for all target groups, of managing operations and supplying the service with content by engaging in procurement and negotiating contractual licenses. This mandate includes massive digitalisation of printed material and other media based on a multi-year plan, as well as development of digital library services, search functions and metadata for researchers and the general public. Digital library services for children that have already been developed and the Swedish Literature Bank should be provided with permanent government funding.
Total SEK 90 million

STRONGER NATIONAL LIBRARY AUTHORITY

In addition to its mandate to build national digital services, as the National Library of Sweden is given a clearer mandate to support the entire library system with infrastructure, legal services, metadata, competence, development, research support, help with grants and more. The National Library should follow up on the strategy, proposals and reforms on a regular basis.
Total SEK 25 million

STRONGER NATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE LIBRARY SYSTEM

Set up an independent institution for the continuing education of librarians (Bofi) based on the model used for other professional groups. The purpose is to provide systematic further education to library and information scientists in all sectors of society and at all types of libraries. The main responsibility for said institution should rest with a university with a library and information science program, and the work must be carried out in close collaboration with the National Library and the regional libraries. The *Digitalt först med användaren i fokus* ("Digital First with the User in Focus") project will be continued under the auspices of this new structure.
Total SEK 25 million

Inquiry proposals rarely garner any significant attention in the public debate. But as the work wore on, the libraries nonetheless succeeded in working their way into the national consciousness, which led to an increased amount of attention and appreciation. The mere fact that an inquiry has been under way has sparked interest, and even various interim reports have received a good amount of attention. This preliminary attention paid full dividends in the media when the inquiry was unveiled. Including a full-page opinion piece in the country's largest daily, Dagens Nyheter, a live presentation and handover to the Minister of Culture on SVT in the afternoon, as well as radio and television features and news articles in the press. Few Swedes will have missed the proposal.

And while the Minister of Culture received the proposal in the afternoon, the Riksdag got something as well. That same morning, that is the morning of 7 March, the secretariat gave a presentation to the Riksdag's Culture Committee, which had been closely monitoring the work the entire time, including several presentations and meetings. Once again, the process itself plays a major role, and if political proposals are to become a reality, the Riksdag needs to be made part of the work.

The Government is now "preparing" the case. It has to decide on the final formulation of the strategy, and which of the reform proposals are to be included in the autumn budget. The inquiry's work is now complete, and we can only hope that the Government and the Riksdag will take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen an important part of our democratic infrastructure: the libraries.

Erik Fichtelius
National Coordinator

Erik Fichtelius, National Coordinator, Amanda Lind, Minister for Culture and Democracy, and Gunilla Herdenberg, National Librarian. March 7, 2019.

Photo: Lina Löfström Baker/KB

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Skolbibliotekets roll för elevers lärande. En
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("The School Library's Roll for Student Learning.
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("Status Report May 2016. The National Library's
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library service") (March 2019)

Från ord till handling. På väg mot en nationell
biblioteksstrategi. Utkast. ("From words to actions.
Towards a national strategy for libraries")
(May 2018)

The Treasure Trove of Democracy

Proposal for a National Strategy for Libraries

This strategy proposal aims to strengthen and develop the entire Swedish library system. Knowledge and literature are essential for democracy and the ability of the individual to operate freely in society. The starting point for the strategy is The Swedish Library Act, with its opening section on libraries for everyone. It sets out a vision to the effect that the libraries need to be there for everyone, based on the needs and circumstances of the individual. The goal is a democratic society fortified by literature, knowledge and education. The services and content of the libraries represent the treasures of the people.

Based on the vision set out in the Act and on the goals of the strategy, the report defines six working areas, or means, for achieving the goals. Specifically, these means are the libraries as society's open spaces, reading, learning, research, new digital library services and infrastructure.

The strategy is supplemented by proposals for six specific reforms (to begin with) to strengthen the Swedish library system. A reform package for school libraries, the national minorities and the indigenous Sami, multilingual library services, skills development, digitalisation of cultural heritage and the heritage of knowledge on common platforms, and the tasks of The National Library.

Vision:
LIBRARIES FOR EVERYONE

Goal:
DEMOCRACY A democratic society in which everyone can freely access the world's collected literature and knowledge, in order to be able to operate in society on their own terms.

Means:
SOCIETY'S OPEN SPACES Use the libraries as society's open spaces for mental cultivation, experiences and conversations.

READING Inspire reading experiences, increase everyone's reading and language comprehension and strengthen the place of literature.

LEARNING Develop residents' opportunities for lifelong learning and free opinion formation by means of a coherent chain of educational libraries.

RESEARCH Strengthen the libraries as a constituent part of the research infrastructure and enable open access to scientific results from all publicly-funded research.

NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES Make as much information and literature as possible freely and digitally available to everyone.

COMMON INFRASTRUCTURE Support and stimulate the public-facing libraries with effective, collaborative national and regional library functions and well-trained librarians.