This issue

RURAL AND REMOTE LIBRARIES

UPDATES ON PUBLIC AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN SCANDINAVIA
Much of Scandinavia is very sparsely populated, in comparison with other European countries. Our citizens living in these areas enjoy the civic privileges of access to libraries, and their needs for services are met in numerous ways – there are book buses, online library services and self-serve facilities.

This issue of SLQ puts rural and remote libraries in focus, but you will notice a few other topics included in this number as well. Our goal is to make content more varied so that each issue will provide something of interest for all readers, regardless of which type of library lies closest to heart.
At the center or on the periphery?

If you are at the center, everything else around you seems like periphery or fringe.

In Denmark we have lately been operating with the concept of "Udkantsdanmark" (Fringe Denmark), meaning those areas in the country that are furthest away from the capital, and where local authorities are often characterized by restricted budgets, fewer and fewer jobs, low employment and weak infrastructure.

It suggests poor living conditions and few possibilities for self-realisation. Recently, attempts have been made to change the word “udkant” to another and more positively charged word, but perhaps the whole perspective needs to be changed?

If you live in a small urban community far from the capital, the local town with its library or bookmobile is the center, and the capital is very much perceived as the periphery. The theme of this issue of Scandinavian Library Quarterly describes exactly the strength of a large number of library initiatives without them having necessarily anything to do with larger cities.

New possibilities

The article “With new tasks and functions in rural areas” offers examples of how important the mobile library units are to the local population. It is inspiring to see how many different initiatives are launched in the mobile libraries and how gratifying results, a dedicated staff and many equally dedicated volunteers can achieve.

Another article deals with open libraries – a library concept, which was developed as an alternative to branch closures of Danish libraries, and which is now rapidly spreading in the Danish library sector. The small urban communities’ local library is often the pivotal point of cultural life, and it has been interesting to observe the many open libraries, which are to find their role in an interchange between serviced and self-service opening hours.

We, therefore, have to design our libraries in a different way to the way we used to in order to satisfy both needs. The users are offered completely new possibilities of bringing their influence to bear on the local library, when they can use it for much longer periods than before. The local community is an essential driving force in the open libraries.

A reading campaign

In autumn 2013 the Danish minister for culture, Marianne Jelved, launches a new reading campaign, which over a four-year period can stimulate the Danes into reading more literature and will focus on reading by those, who do not usually do a lot of reading. The idea is for the libraries also to play a major part in this by working with the local community on getting more people interested in reading.

Such campaigns are often launched centrally, but they cannot be implemented in practice without a local anchorage – it is here – round about, that results are generated.

Tine Vind
Head of Department
Libraries
Danish Agency for Culture

Self-service on a Sunday in small Danish library.
Photo: Bjarke Ørsted
In recent years, the dream of houses of literature has featured in Norwegian cultural debate. The House of Literature in Oslo has been a success, and new houses of literature are being built around the country. People want to come together around literature, and the public libraries of Nord-Trøndelag county have envisaged this need to undertake more active dissemination of literature and provide a viable arena for social participation.
nishing (How can we make a good first impression?), exhibitions in the library, dissemination on the internet, the library staff’s skills in oral communication, how we can bring other disseminators into the library, and how we can disseminate literature in arenas other than the library.

Collaboration
There are nine libraries participating in the project: Four city libraries, three combined school and public libraries and two small public libraries. The smallest library has only one employee, whereas the largest has seven. Having such widely differing libraries collaborating together involves some challenges, although this has also proven to be one of the project’s strong points.

We have gained positive experience from having working groups meet to jointly develop specific measures. The groups have been composed on the basis of topics they have wanted to address, or geographical proximity. The groups have completed specific assignments.

One such assignment has consisted in evaluating each other’s libraries on the basis of “Opening the book” principles, which means to provide input and advice concerning the entrance sections, exhibits and interiors in general. Through this collaboration the librarians have become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. We have also learned about the advantages of

An event in a role-model concept from Litteraturhus: “Men in uniform read to children”. Children visiting the fire station and afterwards a fireman reads to children at the library.
team-work, the value of involving the entire staff, and that small and large libraries have a lot to learn from each other.

**Events**
What we have learned most from is arranging authors’ tours with shared marketing and facilitation. As a rule, the project director has arranged the tours, and each library has adapted the event to its local conditions. Through the exchange of experience generated by this, we have learned from each other about practical implementation and local cooperation partners. By doing things...
jointly, we have gained more confidence in staging events that are slightly off the beaten track. We have also changed our opinions about “what can be done here”.

It has been important to us that the success of Nord-Trøndelag House of Literature should be measured not only in terms of its number of events and volume of attendance. Small events that hit home with their audience are equally important.

Visibility
Through the project, we have attempted to establish the “Nord-Trøndelag House of Literature” as a service by the libraries – or perhaps as an alias for the library as such? In this respect we have been deliberately ambiguous. We have undertaken shared marketing of tours and developed profiled material that can be used locally: adverts, posters and press releases. We have a logo, the website www.litteraturhus-nt.no and a Facebook page.

The website is intended to provide information to the public about upcoming events, not only in their own municipality, but also in the neighbouring ones. By showing the scope of arrangements that can take place in the library we also want to raise people’s expectations of the library.

We’re willing and able!
What has been most important to us, is that the project has provided us with good experience of collaboration and of joining forces in a learning and development-oriented process. We have increased our level of activity, become more visible and changed people’s perceptions of the library.

The number of events has increased considerably, the diversity of these events is greater than before, and we are reaching out to people who previously did not come to the library.

Our experience shows that the library works well as an arena for debates, concerts and meetings. We have attracted an actively participating audience. Our libraries have become a forum for positive encounters, shared reflections and unexpected experiences.

The term “house of literature” has proven to provide us with a good tool. It has stimulated and challenged us internally, and it has had a positive effect on cooperation partners and owners, and not least in relation to the public. It has helped engender an increased understanding of how the social remit of the libraries is undergoing change – the libraries should undertake active dissemination.

And finally, the libraries have found and have proven that they are willing to change – and that they have the competence required.
Lom Public Library – from cradle to grave

How can small libraries make a difference?

The long period with positive figures for visits and loans is evidence that the library has become a key institution in the little mountain hamlet of Lom. We believe that this can be explained by physical as well as internal success factors.

Since 1999, the library has participated in approximately ten large and small projects, for which we have applied for and received funding from regional, governmental or private collaboration partners. Oppland County Library has taken a vigorous and active stance in library development in our county, and the other libraries in the northern part of Gudbrandsdalen Valley have served as essential cooperation partners in many of these projects.

As stated by the Official Norwegian Report on Cultural Policy (NOU 2013:4), the libraries have in recent years lost out in the competition for budget funds. We regard provision of external funding as crucial to development of the libraries, in light of the state of municipal finances and the absence of any willingness to invest in libraries.

By securing project funding we have created new options in the library and developed and pursued collaborative relationships with new partners in the library sector as well as outside it. Among the most recent and successful projects, we would like to mention Words about mountains (http://ordomfjell.blogspot.no/p/ord-om-fjell.html) and the EU project The Stranger, on which we have now embarked.

Collaboration
Lom Public Library’s vision is to serve as a library “from cradle to grave”. In practice, this manifests itself in collaboration with institutions such as the local child welfare clinic, day-care center, school, nursing home, volunteer center and Lom Bakery.

The library visits the child welfare clinic for the 18-month check-up to talk about the value of books and reading. At the child welfare clinic we can reach everybody, and we have seen how families that have never previously set foot in the library have been transformed into eager library users.

The library attends parent-teacher conferences in day-care centers as well as schools. The schools and day-care centers are regular visitors to the library, and the librarians’ activities have included visits to the day-care center to present books by way of dramatizations.

In collaboration with the schools, the library has developed the "Reading plan for Lom”. The plan states that each school class is entitled to at least two book presentations per year at the primary level and one at the lower secondary level. In 2012, the library undertook 25 presentations of new books to the schoolchildren of the village.

To cater to the needs for library services among the oldest inhabitants we cooperate with the Volunteer Center on delivery of books to those who are unable to get to the library on their own. When there is a demand, we have placed a book depot in the nursing home and gone there to hold readings for the residents.

We have also collaborated with the local bakery on themed events, with the local writers’ association on the literature festival “Authors’ Days”, and with local enthusiasts on dissemination of literature.

The most crucial physical success factor is the library’s central location, close to the municipal center and encircled by schools and day-care centers. As regards the internal success factors, we have identified a total of six: project work, collaboration, dissemination, creating visibility for the library, supplementary professional training and a general love of libraries.

Dissemination of literature
The digital revolution has made books more available than ever before. Now, you can sit comfortably on your own couch and download books to your tablet computer at a reasonable cost. This means that the library must provide services other than merely putting books on display in order to persuade the users to get up from the couch.
We believe that active dissemination of literature, to identify books that suit each individual, books that the borrowers are not even aware of, to talk books out from the shelves, must be a key task for the libraries in the future. We have mentioned dissemination to children when describing our collaboration with schools and day-care centers.

In collaboration with Lom Bakery we arrange annual book presentation events for adults. We also collaborate with local enthusiasts on dissemination of comic books and poetry.

Creating visibility for ourselves
To remind the inhabitants of our existence, we need to profile the library and our services. Being visible in the press and social media is essential. Since 2008, we have been producing the blog “Three Wise Women”. The blog is updated weekly, and tells stories of large and small events in the library, often with a humorous twist.

The blog is an important channel of information and a method for marketing the library, even outside the confines of Lom. “Three Wise Women” has followers from all parts of the country, and we believe that the digital campaign was a significant reason why Lom came top in the competition for the “Library of the Year” award in 2012.

In order to undertake library development in a small community it is essential to venture out in search of some new inspiration. We go on annual study trips, attend relevant training courses and have taken supplementary education.

It is also crucial to devote time to updating skills during working hours, even in a small library. We have dedicated one hour per week as a scheduled reading hour, when the librarians read book reviews, authors’ biographies or excerpts from books. This task is given high priority.

For the love of libraries
We regard the borrowers and the literature as the key constituents of a library’s activities, and the librarian as a builder of bridges between these. Irrespective of whether the library is large or small, located in the center or on the periphery, the love of these key constituents remains a decisive factor.

Through the Norwegian public acquisition scheme for books, the libraries are supplied with books that have undergone quality assessment. We have a special responsibility for disseminating this literature to our users. In a small community such as Lom, you can get to know each borrower. You find out what their taste in literature is, and can keep this in mind when reading with a view to later dissemination.

We hope that this involvement with the borrowers and with literature, which we refer to as love of libraries, will result in good dissemination efforts and provision of good services. Ideally, the library should provide a boost to literature as well as to the borrower.

Rita Mundal
Chief Librarian
Lom public library
rita.mundal@lom.kommune.no
With new tasks and functions in rural areas

Danish development project successfully demonstrates how to renew and develop library services in an attempt to present rural areas as attractive living areas for all kinds of citizens. New skills, such as selling and facilitating, are needed when in contact with citizens. And new outreach services such as reservations on demand and partnerships with both private and public institutions are necessary in future local library activities.

Seven Danish libraries with mobile libraries have been working on a development project called *The Good Life in Rural Areas*. The project, funded by the Danish Agency for Culture, covers 167,000 people living in rural areas. The libraries joined forces in an attempt to renew and develop the mobile library to show how it can contribute to development in these areas. The library gains access to individual institutions, local society and the citizens. It is a flexible service, moving from place to place according to the wishes and needs of individuals.

This project demonstrated that libraries are capable of renewing and targeting services by reaching out and contacting new groups of people in the rural areas. The mobile library and its employees can do something that no other public services can: gathering people together to create companionship, feelings of closeness, and solidarity – values held in high regard by the local population.

“People often live in the rural areas because of the companionship, and we must be a part of this special companionship through creating new services and involving the inhabitants in innovative processes!” (Bente Kristoffersen, Chief librarian Brønderslev Libraries).

Some of the results from the project:

- **Reservations on demand**
  New types of reservation were tried: reservations in institutions at regular intervals to more event-oriented reservations such as visiting a local eatery, a harvest celebration, or a village festival.
Discuss among the library staff whether the schedule works well and test reservations for select groups of people.

- **Particularly passionate people and partnerships**
  The libraries contacted groups of volunteers and new partners to develop joint projects. Results included increased fundraising, more cultural lectures and events, and digital training at local companies. We learned that partnerships are best formed by personal contact, and that it is important to engage the partner early in the project. Focus on digital learning.

- **Developing qualifications**
  We conducted an education course for drivers and other persons dedicated to the work of mobile libraries about the new roles and functions in the mobile library. We must learn to sell ourselves and our mobile library, and we must use our own individual skills and contacts when gathering knowledge about rural areas.

- **Developing ideas and innovation**
  When developing new services in the mobile library, it is important to create win-win situations for the citizens and the library. You should push the envelope of your professional skills and think innovatively. Also think outside the box in your municipality, for example by cooperating with the staff of homes for the elderly.

- **Select groups of people**
  New target groups were tested: Young recruits at an army facility, teenagers and adult men with an interest in hunting.

  We got better results from selecting a target group and working in-depth with them, by putting together the best team of library staff, and by introducing the library into new contexts. Reading clubs, lectures and book boxes have also been big successes.

- **The role of facilitator**
  As library staff, we have a role in facilitating processes and development projects in rural areas. Think about cooperation across borders and find local ambassadors.
• It begins with the children
The project has also resulted in our new role as facilitator and in new concepts for learning and cultural experiences among children in rural areas. We have learnt to focus on children’s linguistic development and discovered that the library must come to the children, because children in rural areas are not very mobile.

• Digital learning and self-help
Our advice: Think of the mobile library as an important resource in future digital learning. Over the course of the project we introduced digital learning to different and new target groups: Young recruits in military services, adult men with great interest in hunting, and young people in continuation schools.

The learning sessions were located in workplaces, often during working hours. It has been a great success. In one of the participating municipalities, new digital services on board the bus were also tried:

It begins with children and a focus on linguistic development but includes a wide scale of target groups: Young recruits at an army facility, teenagers and adult men with interest in hunting.

the opportunity of voting by mail in the mobile library for a local election raised the turnout considerably. Voting by mail in mobile libraries will therefore be offered in several municipalities for the coming election in November.

The development work continues
See our film in English on Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgYisLNnzw. And follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bogbussen. This site connects established mobile library networks. Nordic languages are primarily used, but English is also very welcome. Other mobile libraries and individuals are welcome to contribute news, comments and ideas for future work in rural areas.

Hanne Marie Knudsen
Director of Knudsen Syd consultancy firm
(www.knudsensyd.dk)

Photo: Peter Birk
Small libraries an asset for municipalities

Often, the library is not only a small municipality’s only cultural center, but it is also much more. I interviewed the library directors of a few rather small municipal libraries, and I inquired about where they obtained the resources for the libraries to function so actively.

There are still many small municipalities in Finland, although the population is indeed concentrated more around the larger urban regions as small municipalities lose residents. There is a total of 217 municipalities with a population of less than 10,000, i.e. slightly more than two thirds of all municipalities, where 17% of the country’s entire population lives. Municipal mergers have decreased the number of small municipalities, although the impact has not yet been significant.

Much ado in Toholampi

Toholampi is located in the province of Central Ostrobothnia in West Finland. The rural municipality is home to 3,426 residents. The library belongs to the Anders library consortium and it is known for being dynamic. Pia Rask-Jussila was Toholampi’s library director for two years. According to Rask-Jussila, it is a matter of “small libraries being just as good as larger ones in proportion. Pretexts such as being far from everything and small and something to be pitied, or that rural patrons don’t need the latest things, are not good enough.”

In a small group, you should think outside of the box and ask what the library’s core functions are. The backbone for everything is feasible, basic services – working for the good of fact and fiction. Rask-Jussila’s worst nightmare would be for the library to become nothing more than a conveyor of fiction.

Communication and marketing

The key question in a small municipality involves the selection of staff. “The library needs to have a face, preferably several faces, but at least one in the form of the library director. It’s not enough to be just a public servant; rather, you have to be capable of argumentation and presenting facts. The ability to express yourself is also a must. You should never say, ‘we only loan books here’.”

Integrating communication and marketing into your own work is essential. The director must play the role of a sales rep – always prepared to represent his/her library. Creating the right types of partnerships is important; in a small municipality, it is indeed easier.

Flexible opening hours

In addition to book loaning, Toholampi has invested in active book recommendations, events, projects through outside funding, multi-functional and cozy facilities as well as a variety of equipment. The library has organized movie nights for children and young people, offered opportunities to produce digital material, loaned sports equipment and sold tickets.

The opening hours are flexible, and there are more patrons than loans. The library has to go out, take part in various events, give its all and be unpredictable!

Northern spirit at Sompio library

Sompio library is a regional library for three municipalities: Sodankylä, Savukoski and Pelkosenniemi. It began operations in 2009. Sompio library is the first regional library in Lapland, and it is based on an agreement of voluntary, joint operation. The municipalities are located in the eastern part of the province of Lapland. The reason for establishing a regional library was to safeguard high-quality library and information services in the area and to support the purposeful development of services.

According to library director Tiina Heinänen, creating events on a regular basis is one way to keep the library visible and lively. They have a Book Café once a month, reading circles for senior citizens and the disabled in Sodankylä, story hour, a handicrafts club as well as various events organized by other groups and organizations.

Diversity of libraries

A challenging aspect of Sompio library’s operations is the fact that patrons can obtain services and materials in the Sami language. The Reading Diploma for children and young people is also available in Sami.
Now, medication is taken to residents along with their books – the partnership is a real win-win situation.

The library as a center of culture
"You never get tired of looking into a child's bright eyes," says Pekka Termonen, library director of Kannonkoski library in Central Finland.

As director, he manages the libraries of two small municipalities as well as the cultural affairs of the Kannonkoski municipality. Good networks of partners make it possible to host international artists and exhibit their works in a small municipality. Networking and strong partnerships among various stakeholders are, according to Termonen, a key issue. Furthermore, smooth-functioning logistics between libraries is a necessary asset for small libraries.

The library functions as a gathering place for organizations and associations and can even loan kettle-bells, snowshoes and games and puzzles. Mr Termonen also offers people gathering in the library coffee from the coffee machine. The library also houses a movie theatre that seats 20 and is actively frequented by patrons. Funding for the library has remained at a good level, which is evidence of the library's vibrant operations.

Management and visibility
I, myself, work as the director of a large library; Oulu has a population of 190,000 and our library comprises 23 library units. Like small municipalities, large
cities also have to do a lot of work for the advocacy of their libraries. As regards our patrons, not very many are aware of the types of services libraries offer nowadays. The Oulu City Library has its own part-time communications officer who has plenty of work in carrying out the basic communication alone. The Education and Culture Committee, which makes decisions pertaining to the library, is quite detached from library-related issues because it also handles issues related to education, culture and teaching. The library is a rather minute part of a large city organization.

The significance of character is also a common denominator for both small and large libraries. How well are you capable of creating good relations with decision-makers, the administration of the municipality and city and your own supervisors? Advocacy must always be based on positive relationships.

Be visible online
Good management is extremely important, whether you have a lot of resources at your disposal or just a few. The directors in small libraries, especially, are often the same as ‘a walking library’ – they cannot hang up their cloak even in the store. Libraries must be open-minded and innovative.

It is important for small libraries, especially, which are located far from large urban concentrations, to be visible online. The mere physical library services are no longer sufficient nowadays. Libraries should at least have their own Facebook profile. Also, blogs, Twitter and other forms of social media provide some of the best opportunities to share information about the library and increase visibility.

The pages should also be updated often to keep patrons interested. Libraries must be open-minded and innovative. They can no longer survive with the old selection of services. Small municipalities must be brave enough to open up doors to new partnerships and in this way guarantee continuity and visibility for libraries.

Pirkko Lindberg
Director of Libraries
Oulu City Library-Provincial Library
Photo: Tiina Heinänen

Left: Have a ‘Blind date book’. Right: Library assistant Riitta Sneck testing the fitness condition of library chief Pekka Termonen, Kannonkoski library.
What figures can tell

Offering good library activities within a reasonable distance of all citizens in a thinly populated part of the country is a challenge. Swedish library statistics show that public libraries in the country’s sparsely populated municipalities often find a passable way to offer satisfactory services despite the population not having access to unlimited resources.

According to the law, every municipality in Sweden must have at least one public library. Municipalities that don’t have very many inhabitants generally have higher costs per capita for their public library operations than libraries in populous municipalities. The reason is that even they must be able to maintain a given basic level of library services; just because they have few inhabitants doesn’t mean they can only purchase volumes A to M of an encyclopedia.

The basis for a high-quality media collection costs just as much whether there are 1,000 or 10,000 inhabitants. August Strindberg, Stieg Larsson and Astrid Lindgren should be made available regardless of whether the municipality has so few inhabitants that they can’t fill the library’s rooms.

Higher costs

This is clearly indicated in the 2012 Official Library Statistics of Sweden, where public libraries in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants report that they pay SEK 79 per inhabitant per year for their media, and public libraries in municipalities where there are more than 100,000 inhabitants can maintain a good collection for SEK 43 per inhabitant per year.

In addition, public libraries in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants have 0.48 new acquisitions per inhabitant per year, and public libraries in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants have 0.22 new acquisitions.

Public libraries in sparsely populated municipalities often function as the municipality’s cultural center in other ways as well, and moreover often have a hand in school library operations – either through being integrated with the school libraries or through otherwise supporting the supply of media to the schools.

Public libraries in small municipalities therefore must also have a higher amount of person-years of work per 1,000 inhabitants than larger municipalities. Apart from shops, sports fields, and the church, the library is the only public arena in many small municipalities where the inhabitants can meet.

More books

Nor is it unusual for libraries to take on the role of tourist agency, or become the municipality’s center for civic information and loan out its rooms for meetings. Librarians must be “Jacks of all trades” who not only have traditional library work in their job descriptions but also function as information clerks, coordinators, and project managers.

This is also visible in library statistics: public libraries in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants have 0.75 person-years of work per 1,000 inhabitants, while public libraries in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants have 0.48.

In Sweden in general, there is one work-year per 2,000 inhabitants at public libraries.

Public libraries in municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants have 9.2 printed books per inhabitant; public libraries in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants have 3.1 books per inhabitant. The average for the entire country is 4.1. But public libraries in municipalities with the lowest number of inhabitants have a higher rate of borrowing: 8.9 loans per inhabitant compared to 7.4 in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Better collaboration

It is noteworthy that municipalities in the northernmost parts of Sweden, where there can be as few as two inhabitants per square kilometre, are better at reaching out with their operations in various ways as counted per capita than heavily populated municipalities in counties with large cities.

Despite the logistical difficulties, they reach out to the inhabitants through more book-mobiles, unmanned loan desks and a higher number of staffed libraries per inhabitant than other parts of the country. One way to succeed at this work despite limited resources has been to establish interlibrary collaboration between the libraries in the county’s municipalities.

They have a joint library system and coordinated transports. The inhabitants can borrow and return books at any library they choose. They can search all the media at the county web site, where – through collaboration – they can also reach other types of library besides public libraries. They often get more virtual visitors through the joint web system than public libraries in the rest of the country.
Up north
Sweden’s northernmost county, Norrbotten, can be mentioned as an example of what it’s like in a sparsely populated area. All together, Norrbotten’s libraries serve close to 250,000 inhabitants who live spread out across an area that corresponds nearly to one-fourth the total area of Sweden; in reality it’s more than twice as large as the country of Holland, which has approximately 16.7 million inhabitants.

In Norrbotten there are staffed library operations at 39 addresses, as well as seven book-mobiles that make the rounds of 658 book-mobile stops. Additionally, there are 140 other unmanned loan desks that provide parts of the public libraries’ collections at retirement homes, shops, and preschools. Half of the public libraries are integrated and function as school libraries at the same time.

Many adult inhabitants study distance courses and turn to the public library for their study literature. A higher proportion of citizens also have their media delivered to their homes than the rest of the country. There are also a university library, three specialised libraries, and four hospital libraries in Norrbotten.

A challenge
Offering good library activities within a reasonable distance of all citizens in a thinly populated part of the country is a challenge. Certain municipalities only have just over 3,000 inhabitants but must still be able to provide satisfactory public library operations.

This situation can also clearly be seen in the statistics, where a small municipality like Arjeplog with 3,000 inhabitants purchases media for the public library for SEK 82 per inhabitant per year while a heavily populated municipality, for example Kiruna with 23,000 inhabitants, spends SEK 42 per inhabitant per year.

Public libraries in the northern counties even have a higher rate of borrowing than the rest of the country. The municipalities that have the lowest number of inhabitants top the list for borrowing.

Success through collaboration
What do all these figures tell us? Firstly, it is dangerous if the politicians who decide on resources for public libraries focus exclusively on performance indicators without taking the population, and the geographic area of the municipality, into consideration. Performance indicators can only be compared between municipalities that have similar conditions.

Secondly, the statistics show that public libraries in sparsely populated municipalities often found a passable way to offer satisfactory services despite the population not having access to unlimited resources. This could be a good inspiration for any library.

The path to success goes through collaboration between different library organisations, flexible distribution solutions, and the personal contact that the librarian and the visitor can have in this small-scale environment. The inhabitants, perhaps, may not have the opportunity to visit the library often as they must travel several kilometres, but when they do come by they take the opportunity.
With the periphery at the center

Some years ago, I (Trude) went to a library in a small Norwegian town, where I intended to write three exam papers in approximately the same number of days. I placed myself in the innermost part of the reading room with all the secondary literature that a library wizard had retrieved from various shelves and on remote loan. My PC was plugged in, hot coffee was at hand, and I was poised for a productive day.

But then I suddenly heard some strange noises from behind the bookshelves. It was a kind of mumbling that increased in volume. To be sure, coming in I had noticed the solitary man who was leafing through some academic journals, but I was not prepared for noise.

After having attempted to block out the noise for about half an hour, I went to the librarian and told her that I was unable to concentrate. The librarian obviously knew the man, and headed straight for the reading room.

I felt a pang of guilt. After all, it was not my intention to chase him out of the library. But no such thing happened. When I returned the man was still there, but the noise had subsided.

Accessible for all

Since then I have reflected on this little episode, since it reveals a lot about what a public library should be: an accessible place, open to all, free of charge and with no dress code, no CV or network required. Even if you are a person at the very margin of society, there is still room for you in the library.

And not only in Scandinavia; during our visit to New York in April, a man had made himself a bed out of some chairs outside the New York Public Library. The vagrant with his dirty socks was left to lie undisturbed on the steps leading into the venerable marble building.

Nobody told him to disappear, nobody turned up their noses at him. There was obviously a tacit understanding that a library is a protected spot. A place where you can escape from all prejudice, meet your like-minded or completely opposite-minded fellow humans and find quietude and recreation.

It is also a place where you can be in the proximity of other people for an hour or three, if that is what you need.

Common property

Today, Norwegian public libraries are most frequented by children, immigrants and the elderly. Most libraries are located in small communities, in unassuming buildings and with an equally unassuming staff.

In terms of geography as well as target groups, the libraries are located on the periphery. The target group that most enterprises aim for, comprises people aged 25 to 50 who live in large cities, have a substantial household income and focus on material wealth. You may surely find these people in the public library as well, but they will hardly be in the majority.

In this sense, the public library remains committed to its founding ideology. Quite simply, this is democracy and equality at its best. Beneath it lies the 18th century idea that knowledge and enlightenment should be accessible to all. From being the privilege of only a few – those with money, power and education – literature became common property.

House of culture

There are public libraries in the large cities too, of course, but the overwhelming majority are found in small towns in small municipalities, on the periphery, similar to how the greatest literature found in the library also engages with life on the margins.

Today, the public libraries have more on offer than merely literature: readings, interviews with authors, themed events, art exhibitions, lectures and much else besides. In this way, the public library serves also as a house of culture for small towns and settlements with no house of culture of their own.

For this autumn, the library in Os outside Bergen has scheduled a poetry slam and its own literary festival. At Nord-Aurdal Public Library you can participate in a seminar on the meaning of dreams. The library in the little mountain hamlet of Lom, which won the “Norwegian Library
of the Year” award in 2012, has a lending rate which is twice the national average.

**Map and compass**

Thus, the libraries in rural Norway are staffed by enthusiasts and people who are genuinely engaged in providing cultural events to everybody – not least to user groups who have neither the finances, nor the opportunity to seek out the large cultural institutions in the urban centers.

In a world and in a reality where it is becoming increasingly difficult to orientate oneself, the public library can provide both a map and a compass. It is thus only logical that the Norwegian Parliament, Stortinget, wants to reinforce the social role of libraries, in terms of their responsibility for dissemination and their function as a meeting place.

For – where else can one spend a little time in peaceful coexistence with a solitary reader who is making strange noises on the other side of the bookshelf?

Ingebrigt Steen Jensen, Lecturer and writer

Ingebrigt@allegutta.no

Trude Solheim, Secondary-school teacher

Trude.Lie@nesbru.vgs.no
Reaching out to users everywhere

We all know that there are a number of search engines, such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo for example, that provide all kinds of information when you type something in the search box and press enter. Those search engines provide some kind of information from some source or another in some format. However, there is a certain distinct difference between the new portal Finna and them.

Finna is intended for users interested in items available in libraries, archives and museums, be they books, paintings, CDs, old bus timetables, chainsaws, scientific articles or whatnot.

To put it simply, Finna endeavours to provide information on material in all Finnish memory organizations in a meaningful, simple, yet informative and explorable way to users aging 6 to 106 years old. This certainly is an ambitious goal that Finna is trying to achieve.

No ads
Finna offers information in an easy-to-read, comprehensible format, providing first a selection of the results with small thumbnails and nutshell information of the search and then an option to "dig down deeper".

Selecting one of the results gives you information about the type of item in question, the author, painter or archivist, date of manufacture, publishing or discovery, and even information on where the item can be borrowed, viewed or downloaded. What’s more, you can find many other mindboggling pieces of information from reliable sources... and guess what? No ads.
At the time this article is being written, Finna continues to be under development. The launch of the 1.0 version is planned for October 22nd. Currently, there are (only) 9 million entries in Finna, but the number is growing rapidly as more and more libraries, archives, and museums join Finna and their collections are added to it.

Different search features
Finna has many features that the commercial discovery portals lack, such as support for different standards that the memory organizations use in storing their material or support for partial material.

For example, songs on a CD can be found by searching for the CD itself or a particular song on the CD in question. Go ahead and try it! Just go to www.finna.fi. Select a language from one of the three languages on the interface, and search for Jean Sibelius, for example, or The Ramones, or Edgar Rice Burroughs or Steve Jobs or even “moottorisaha” (which means “chainsaw” in Finnish). Have a look, explore and see what Finna can do already. And don’t forget to try the different search features, such as the timeline selection tool, different facets, geographic search tool and the other advanced search tools.

Supports multiple applications
The version of Finna found at www.finna.fi is based on VuFind open source software (vufind.org) and our version of it supports only Finnish, Swedish and English, but additional languages can easily be added to the system.

In addition, support for multiple background systems such as Voyager OPAC, picture banks and e-book systems already exist and more will be added in the future.

Finna already supports multiple applications for users to log in and manage their loans, make reservations for material in different libraries, save their searches with automatic alerts of new results (when e.g. new material is added to Finna), and export reference information of search results to e.g. EndNote, RefWorks, Facebook or even Google+. When the resource description access (RDA) format comes along, support for it will already be in Finna.

Continues to develop
For the administrators in Finna’s member organizations, an easy-to-use, what-you-see-is-what-you-get (wysiwyg), customizable administrator panel allows them to create their ‘own’ version of Finna, which has their organization’s own look and feel and a selection of their preferred search tools.

For example, administrators can decide on the appearance of the search results and ranking. Naturally, a powerful statistic tool is also provided and it is based on open source software called Piwik (piwik.org).

The plans for Finna’s development in the next years include e.g. adding support for the use of ontologies, functional requirements for bibliographic records (FRBR) and authority control. We see Finna as a service that continues to grow and develop far into the future.

The making of Finna
Now there are many reasons why the use of open source is justified:
1) the additional value of the software is in how it either enhances existing activities, and/or enables new, more efficient ways of doing things
2) the value also depends extensively on how easy it is to use and deploy the software
3) the extent of the functionality of the software in question alone is not sufficient; rather, the usability, connectivity (integration capability, with flexibility and open interfaces) and easy modifiability (customization, personalization) are also extremely important features of open source software.

To put it simply, using open source software means that we can explore and develop the source code of the software in question by ourselves to build an application, tool or system that suits our needs.

One significant aspect of Finna is that the development of it at the National Library of Finland follows the agile software development method, Scrum, and progresses in short, three-week cycles. During the three-week cycles, issues based on feedback by the end-users and member organizations are prioritized according to their importance and addressed.

Hope others will join
More information pertaining to Scrum and agile software development is available at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agile_software_development en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrum_(development).

In 2013 and the following years, the quantity of material, number of organizations, and the functionality of Finna will continue to increase at a fast pace. We also hope that others will join in and develop the components of the Finna open source software, making it even better.

And remember, the Finna system and its source code is available to each and every organization that longs for a discovery service.

Aki Lassila
Head of Development
National Library Services
National Library of Finland
aki.lassila@helsinki.fi
It started at Silkeborg public library in Jutland in 2004. The municipality were to take over the library service in Gjern, a rural municipality with very small local libraries. It would require heavy staff expenses and the municipality had to economize – also in terms of the libraries.

But the library’s wish to provide a better offer within the economic framework led to the idea of trying to let the users unlock the libraries themselves. Funding from the Danish Library Agency (now part of the Danish Agency for Culture) kick-started the experiment and in collaboration with the innovation firm Cordsa the technology was developed, and the borrowers were very satisfied with the new library.

The model
The definition of an open library, engendered by the Silkeborg model, is a library department, which apart from the staffed hours, has been extended with more opening hours, where the citizen herself can “unlock the door”. Access is typically by way of a borrower’s ticket or the medical card that every Dane possesses, or a special borrower’s ticket with inbuilt RFID chip for verification of the user.

Over a period of several years, the development of library infrastructure in Denmark has moved towards centralization. With the municipal reform of 2007, the municipalities became fewer and larger – the libraries followed suit; several small branches were closed, resulting in renewed strength of the main libraries.

Dissemination of the model
The many branch closures worried the professionals and politicians. Was the free and equal access for the citizens to culture and learning being jeopardized? With this in mind, the Agency in 2009 offered a ‘pool’ for the establishment of an open library – on the clear understanding that the libraries did not reduce the hours of staffed service.

The government grant sparked off the development. A further 40 open libraries were introduced, and the development continues. At first it happened mostly in the rural areas; but now also the largest cities, such as Aarhus and Copenhagen, have opened local libraries, where the citizens can unlock the door themselves.

Experiences
Experiences show that in general loans and particularly visiting figures increase, and new borrowers appear who have not previously used the library. Overall, the local population gains a strong ownership of the library, and the politicians focus more intently on the local libraries. The sense of responsibility is extremely high among children, youngsters and adults.

But, as is often the case, there is a flip side of the coin. Professionals fear that politicians overlook the mediation aspect of librarianship in favour of large savings in terms of staff hours, when the borrowers seem so easily able to deal with everything themselves.

This has happened in some places and is bound to happen in several more over the next few years. Nevertheless, the question then arises whether a partly self-serviced branch is better than no library service at all?

User survey 2013
The Danish Agency for Culture and 42 municipalities with Ramboll Management as supplier asked about the citizen’s attitude and satisfaction with the open libraries.

The survey revealed that:
92 % feel that they receive the help they need
91 % feel it is easy to use the open library
45 % do not differentiate between there being staff available or not
35 % prefer to visit the library when there is staff present.

Facts about open libraries
Local Government Denmark’s survey, 2013, Momentum
75 % of municipalities with open libraries expect to expand the scheme
35 % of municipalities have concrete plans for introducing the scheme
50 % of municipalities contemplate introducing the scheme
78 % of municipalities have experienced increasing visiting figures
65 % of municipalities have seen an increase in loans.
Citizens look after the open libraries

For several years it has been evident that citizens look after their libraries. The problems of loss are no greater than in other libraries and there are very few cases of vandalism and disorder. A few urban branches have experienced problems, and one library has had to close the self-service hours for a period of time.

Whether the few problems are due to the fact that an old democracy like the Danish one is generally based on trust, or whether it is because of a special respect for the library as an institution, has not been the object of any further analysis. But the fact is that the fear, which the staff in many cases harboured beforehand as to what was going to happen to their library, has proved groundless. Things are going well.

Continued development

As new municipalities join in, the libraries with several years’ experience of the self-service model are working on developing the concept further. How does one disseminate the library’s core services in the best possible way, when no staff is present? With funding from the Danish Agency for Culture’s development pool, several systematic development projects have been completed concerning the open libraries.

A couple of projects from Aalborg Public Libraries in collaboration with North Jutland libraries are worth mentioning. One is called: How does the library sound? This deals with atmosphere-creating sound in the self-service library and with dissemination of e.g. the libraries’ electronic services via loudspeaker features. A number of very high-quality sound tracks are available to all the country’s libraries, manned as well as unmanned.

The other one is Vær tensklasse. This project is about the development of a dissemination concept with methods for qualifying an indirect hosting, when staff is not present. It could for example be communication on signs, screens, additional sales initiatives, development of codices for the ‘hosting’ library and of dilemma games to prepare the staff for relational ‘hosting’ service.

Charting of open libraries in 2011

Professor Carl Gustav Johannsen, Copenhagen University charted the existing 81 open libraries for the Danish Agency for Culture. The dissemination of the scheme was primarily due to the wish to offer the citizens increased accessibility, while about a third of the cases were due to the demands for cuts, e.g. as an alternative to the closing of local libraries. Read more about this in Carl Gustav Johannsen’s article in the periodical New Library World: “Staffless libraries – recent Danish public library experiences.”
The pensioner Jörgen came to the library for help to buy a camera online, now he scans his old diapositive photos, participates in internet forums and studies digital image production. Photo: Malmö Lärcentrum
in learning

The learning center in the Malmö City Library is a unique resource, freely available to all visitors. Here, you can sit down at one of the center’s 30 computers – Mac or PC – equipped with a range of different software programmes. You can get help fixing your resumé, scan and edit pictures, or just print out a text.

“People come here from around the world, with questions and needs from around the world,” says Stefan Wahlstedt, project manager for the Malmö Lärcentrum.

The center focuses on free learning, without obligation or judgement, and is open to all. It is a collaboration between Utbildningsförvaltningen (the Malmö educational administration) and the City Library, and has been run in project form since 2010.

What is unique about the center is that the library has employed three pedagogues, who work alongside the 20 or so librarians. The key is an open attitude.

“For learning to feel inspirational and meaningful, the individual must feel he or she is part of the learning environment. We’re therefore working actively to get our visitors to feel like they are co-producers in our operations,” Wahlstedt emphasizes.

The digital gap
It’s easy to believe that most people today have knowledge and access to technology so they can participate digitally, but the staff at the Lärcentrum meet people of all ages on a daily basis who need help managing digital tasks.

“We have visitors of all ages, and it’s easy to think that the older people need the most help in the digital world, but there are also younger people who need help; for them it’s a considerably sensitive issue to admit they don’t know how,” says Catarina Cederholm, who has been a pedagogue at the Lärcentrum since the beginning. It’s also clear that many people in Malmö, for different reasons – primarily socio-economic – don’t have access to a computer either at home or at work.

The Lärcentrum wants to see to it that as many people as possible have access to digital services, since it is viewed as a prerequisite for being part of a democratic society.

“We notice how the digital gap is being constantly filled. After the computer comes a reader, a tablet, new communities on the Net, programme updates. There’s always a need for a guiding person between man and machine,” Cederholm stresses.

Personal identity number
Right from the start, Lärcentrum was visited by many young immigrant men who had come to Sweden without their families.

“On some days there could be 20 young men who would stand and wait unobtrusively and politely for their turn to sit in front of a screen. Many of them came from Afghanistan and spoke neither Swedish nor English, which made it nearly impossible to communicate,” Cederholm tells us.

Since many of them could speak neither Swedish nor English, employee Sara Sarabi, who speaks Farsi, was an important link. All of this has primarily been significant for illiterate people, who started learning to read and write in their native language.

Treating the young men as individuals in their own right was also important. Or, as some of them expressed it: “I think the most beautiful thing I found here is that nobody asks you about your personal number, as I face that everywhere.”

Pedagogical manifesto
The pedagogical work in the Lärcentrum is based on free, informal learning.

“We’ve chosen to formulate our thoughts from the concepts of ‘sounding board’, ‘potluck’, and ‘We say yes!’ We call it our pedagogical manifesto,” Wahlstedt explains.

Sounding board means not being the one...
with the answers, but instead being the one who listens and asks questions. It’s a matter of trying to understand the level at which visitors asking for help find themselves; this is best done by sitting down alongside them, actively listening and conversing, the staff argue.

The Lärcentrum also works as a sounding board within the library and has developed into a learning environment for the employees. The activities in the Lärcentrum have created a need in the staff to learn more about technology and digital questions through learning from each other and sharing their skills.

_Potluck_ means involving the visitors so they participate in the work on developing the activities and _We say yes!_ means that the Lärcentrum collaborates with different organisations and education providers.

Many SFI students who don’t think they have enough time in school to practise speaking Swedish come to the library and the Lärcentrum. Those who haven’t yet got a place on a Swedish course, and those who don’t have particularly many
people to speak Swedish with despite having lived in Sweden a long time, also come here. Collaboration with SFI courses has a long tradition in the libraries around Malmö.

**Living books**

In its first three years, the Lärcentrum has also worked on a concept called “Open Office”. They want to create a dynamic new environment in the library by inviting companies and organizations to work and be seen in this environment for several days. So far, the Lärcentrum has been visited by an advertising agency, a game company, a web company and an e-book publisher for a week each. During the afternoons there have been regular programme items such as lectures, debates, and company presentations.

Company employees have also acted as “living books” and let themselves be loaned out. The library’s visitors thus got the opportunity to talk and discuss with them on an individual basis. Using living books this way works as a kind of vocational guidance.

“We believe our work makes a difference and the Lärcentrum, as a pedagogical learning resource along with the library, will be developed further. We hope it can gradually become a permanent part of the City Library,” says Wahlstedt.

---

Stefan Wahlstedt  
Project coordinator at Malmö lärcentrum  
stefan.wahlstedt@malmo.se

Catarina Cederholm  
Educator at Malmö lärcentrum

Fredrik Karlsson  
Educator at Malmö lärcentrum

Lisa Berger  
Librarian at Malmö lärcentrum
DENMARK

MILLION DOLLAR LIBRARY IN AARHUS

Aarhus and Chicago Public Libraries are co-operating in order to create new models for innovation, experimentation and decision-making within libraries. The libraries have been awarded one million dollars by the Gates Foundation, their biggest grant so far. The Chicago and Aarhus libraries will be working together with the design company IDEO. The aim is to create and develop new kinds of services and programmes and the results will be presented at a conference in Chicago next year with a toolbox becoming available for all libraries to use.

Photo from the event showing from left to right: Alderman Marc Perera Christensen and two representatives from Chicago Public Library Foundation – president and CEO Rhona S. Frazin and commissioner Brian Bannon and Rolf Hapel, director of Citizens Services and Libraries, Aarhus.

Danmarks biblioteker
http://www.db.dk/kort-nyt/aarhus-gates-støtter-århusianske-biblioteker
Chicago Public Library press release 30.6.2013
http://www.chipublib.org/aboutcpl/cplpr/2013/gates_grant.php

GUESS WHO’S COMING FOR DINNER

The good life in the Danish countryside continues as librarians boldly invite themselves for dinner with the local associations and other active stakeholders in the community. Even if library professionals wish to start by presenting well-prepared project plans, it is not the way to involve people, neither does it help libraries in finding out what the users really want. It is better to come up with ideas together with the local citizens. The seven libraries taking part in the Good Life mobile library project (yes, it’s been covered before in Shortcuts, from a different angle) have promised each other that every library will try out at least two new things which the steering group can help develop. So far, the mobile libraries have e.g. visited new target groups such as a cake making company (which sounds as a tasty mobile library stop).

Life mobile library project (yes, it's been covered before in Shortcuts, from a different angle) have promised each other that every library will try out at least two new things which the steering group can help develop. So far, the mobile libraries have e.g. visited new target groups such as a cake making company (which sounds as a tasty mobile library stop).

Danmarks biblioteker
http://www.db.dk/kort-nyt/aarhus-gates-støtter-århusianske-biblioteker
Chicago Public Library press release 30.6.2013
http://www.chipublib.org/aboutcpl/cplpr/2013/gates_grant.php

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT STORYTELLING CHAIR

Choosing furniture is never easy. Comfortable, fun and different, that’s how the perfect armchair for storytelling should be. Sonderborg Public Library wanted to find a chair which would feed the imagination of young and old alike. Of course, the chair - or chairs, as the library had already decided to buy more than one - should be sturdy and withstand heavy use, too. In the end, the library bought a mermaid chair and ordered a teddy bear chair, a dragon chair and a rhyme chair.

The staff discussed all the chairs separately: e.g. what props could be used with the different chairs. For the mermaid chair, the library bought squid and crab hand puppets and a small fishing rod. A round rug was purchased to go with each of the chairs. The idea was that the chairs would not only be safe places to sit and enjoy your book but also function as mini stages for storytelling.

Perspektiv 6/2013
http://www.bf.dk/~/media/Bibliotekspressen/bladet/2013/Perspektiv6/Perspektiv270613.ashx

GROW (AT) YOUR OWN LIBRARY

Risskov Public Library is luring the young to the library through an inviting garden space suitable for gaming and other popular pastimes. There are plenty of places to sit down, green berry bushes, beautiful marigolds and vegetable beds.

The Grow your library project has turned the outside areas into a library space fit for teenagers – which just might bring some new users to the library during winter.

Danmarks biblioteker
http://www.db.dk/kort-nyt/aarhus-risskov-unikt-projekt-får-de-unge-til-dyrke-biblioteket

Perspektiv 7/2013
http://www.db.dk/kort-nyt/Bibliotekspressen/bladet/2013/Perspektiv6/Perspektiv270613.ashx
EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Finnish library decree regulates e.g. the duties and functions of the central library for public libraries and the provincial libraries as well as the Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, the regional state agencies. It also defines the professional requirements of the staff. The decree was amended earlier this year. The development of national online services and cooperation between the different library sectors are emphasized more strongly in the tasks of the central library for public libraries. In the functions of the provincial libraries promotion of regional development projects and online services are highlighted. The decree also harmonizes the interpretation of the qualification requirements of library staff. The amended decree came into force on the first of July 2013.

Libraries.fi
http://www.kirjastot.fi/fi-FI/ajankohtaista/tiedote/ajankohtaista/uuuskirjastoasetus

LOVE OF READING

Even if Finns are known to be a reading nation and literacy is supported by a strong library system, free education and a number of children’s books in Finnish, young people read less than before. The three-year Love of Reading programme aims to strengthen the reading and writing skills of children aged 6-16, with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The cooperation network around the programme is broad, from the faculties of Humanities and Education at the University of Oulu to the Finnish Library Association, the regional library authorities, Libraries.fi, the Trade Union of Education and the Finnish Broadcasting Company, to name a few. New approaches, tools and models will be tested in pilot projects during 2013-2014, ending with the themed year of diverse literacies in 2015.

Biblioteken.fi

Bibban 2/2013
http://www.biblioteken.fi/FSBF/Bibban

100 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE AT THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

In April 2013, 100 years had passed since the Library of Parliament opened its doors to the general public, instead of being a closed service for the MPs. A strong motivation behind the public service ethos was the library’s role in spreading legal and social information and supporting democracy. Or as the chief librarian Herman Bergholm put it in 1912: “Our aim is that the library should be used as much as possible and be as useful as possible.” The library is open all year round, 57 hours a week for MPs, parliament staff, media, researchers and citizens alike. The guidelines of the library remain the same: open knowledge and free access to information.


SMALL-SCALE MOBILE LIBRARY

Oulu City Library and Oulu University Hospital have acquired a new self-service library for the hospital premises. The library is an easy-to-move bookcase which can be opened using a library card. Hospital patients can use the library 24/7 and other borrowers while the hospital is open. Books can be borrowed for a week at a time and returned in the bookcase. The usual overdue fees apply.

The self-service library is the first of its kind in Finland. It accommodates around one hundred books for readers of all ages.

Kirjastot.fi

Photo: Library of Parliament
LEADING CHANGE, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE
21 library professionals in the Hordaland region are taking part in a tailor-made study programme tackling the challenges of the changing library landscape. The aim of the course is for the participants to be able to manage a concrete change situation in their own work environment. The course works much in the same way as the Finnish year-long programme for library directors in small libraries: to keep it relevant, the contents are continuously related to the everyday work of the participants - many of whom have a staff of two or three. The National Library supports the bachelor-level (15 credits) programme which is a cooperation between Høgskolen Bergen and Hordaland regional library.

Bibliotekforum 2/2013
http://www.bibliotekforum.no/download-file.php?i=072b030ba126b2f4b237f342be9ed44

SWEDEN
TOP POINTS FOR LIBRARIES
Exactly as in the rest of Scandinavia, the Swedes appreciate their libraries. Even so, like Norway, Sweden reports a decrease in library use: while 70 % of the population visited their library at least once in three years during the noughties, last year the percentage of active users had dropped to 46 %.

When it comes to book reading however the statistics look quite positive with 85 % of Swedes having read one or more books during the year. The gaps between different groups are growing, though. All age groups under 65 read less than before and men both visit libraries and read books 15 % less than women. 9 % have read an ebook with 4 % reading ebooks regularly - and library users read ebooks more than non-users.

Biblioteksföreningen
http://www.biblioteksforeningen.org/

USERS’ PET
The previous shortcuts mentioned how according to national surveys library users in Denmark and Finland appreciate the library services as much as ever. The same goes for Norway.

According to a survey, around 60 per cent of Norwegians are happy with their local library while only 2% were of an opposite opinion. In all the Scandinavian countries public libraries top the polls when people are asked which municipal services they most appreciate. When evaluated on a scale from 0 to 100, libraries scored 85 points in Norway.

Some regional differences can be seen though. It seems that people living in the countryside have a more positive attitude towards the offerings of the local library than those in towns and cities.

Overall, library use has doubled since 1978; today half the population are regular library users. But the pattern is the same as elsewhere: library visits are up while people borrow less.

Norwegian Library Association
http://www.norskbibliotekforening.no/article.php?id=3021

New and popular Plassen Cultural Center - including library - in Molde. Photo: 3XN ARCHITECTS
READING AND EXERCISE
How to make reading attractive for children, especially boys? One way is through other hobbies such as sports. The Swedish Arts Council has reserved 3 million Swedish kronas (ca 345 000 €) for reading promotion partnerships between sports clubs and libraries. Apart from creating an interest in reading, what is needed is training, much like in sports.

Biblioteksföreningen
http://www.biblioteksforeningen.org/

SET THE BOOKS FREE
When library branches were being shut down in the small town of Partille, the staff started thinking of new ways of reaching out to the users. That’s when they came up with the idea of library shelves in senior centers, maternity clinics and local businesses.

All the shelves out in the community are easily recognized as a library service, and have been designed for the purpose. Each shelf carries a picture and contact information of the librarian who is responsible for the stock. A library card is not needed as the whole service builds on trust: users are free to take the books home and return them either on the self or to the nearest library.

Framsidan 7/2013
http://www.framsidan.net/2013/07/de-ger-bockerna-frihet/

25 WORLD CLASS SCHOOL LIBRARIES (AND COUNTING)
The school library system is systematically being developed in Sweden. The DIK trade union has created criteria for a good school library which e.g. strengthens the digital competences of the pupils, supports the learning process of both groups and individual pupils and helps the teachers in their use of digital media and printed material. By nominating the libraries who fulfill the criteria as school libraries in world class, DIK wants to draw attention to the libraries’ essential role. So far 25 libraries have made the list.

Swedish highschool Vittra Södermalm (photo) is inspiring learning environments that break down the boundary between education and leisure. Vittra Södermalm has 350 students and is located in a historic building in central Stockholm. Architects: Rosan Bosch.

DIK
www.dik.se/skolbibliotek-i-varldsklass
SLQ has readers in more than 50 countries!

SLQ is read by public and research library staff and a broad number of library connections in public and private management

www.slq.nu has approximately 2,000 unique visitors every month

SLQ is published by the Nordic Library Authorities

GET CONNECTED!
Go to www.slq.nu and get your free subscription on print or subscribe to our electronic newsletter

SLQ has a Facebook page where you can like us and comment our articles:
https://www.facebook.com/ScandinavianLibraryQuarterly