



Network meeting in Finland

Sandra Löfgren

Project manager

Over 1000 students have visited our education spots. They want to come back. Expressions like:

- *I feel free here*
- *I can breathe here*
- *I can make big moves and not interrupt anyone else*
- *Human noises is not dominant here – only noise from the nature*
- *I enjoy to explore the Baltic sea*
- *I am a Baltic Sea protector now*
- *It's so much easier to learn about the nature in the nature instead of sitting still in front of our smartboard. I love it here!*
- *Look what I found... A shrimp! WOW!*

<http://skargardsstiftelsen.se/besoksinformation/utbildningsplats-skargarden/>

<https://vimeo.com/159758549>

We are a foundation – Archipelago foundation in Stockholm County – our purpose is to keep the archipelago landscape in Stockholm area open. Our task is to ensure that citizens and visitors has the opportunity for recreation and rewarding experiences in the archipelago. We supervise over 40 areas (12 000 hectares) with the help of our staff. We work with fauna conservation and monitor protected areas for animals such as eagles, seals and others. We have statues that declare what to focus on and to make sure the purpose of the organization remains.

Visions

The archipelago foundation, as many other organizations, have Visions.

We call it: **Vision2020**. They were created in June 2009. The motto became:

“Archipelago for all”.

The vision is one of the bricks in the future strategy. It guides us how to act in purpose to fulfil our task during the upcoming decade. The overall strategy to fulfil the vision is: *Cooperation, development plan and financing.*

I believe every organization or company have a vision, a vision of achieving goals or reaching out. Often it also includes working with young people or at least listen to what they have to say. Nowadays the big issue is about including our new citizens, the people who are immigrating to our country.

Archipelago foundation has that vision also - we want to reach out to all citizens.

To reach out to a new target group also means we have to make an extra effort.



What have we done and how did we do it!

I have had the privilege to be the project manager for “Utbildningsplats skärgården” In English the project name would be “Education spot archipelago”. Basically it means that the archipelago is an excellent place for learning. The projects goal is to reach out to young people, especially the ones standing far away from our organization. Why!

It's one of our statues and visions. This target group hardly even know we exist! Some have not heard about the archipelago and have no clue how to get there.

How to pick education spots from a big area?

We decided to pick **3 specific areas** on the mainland and one island: Hjälmö. This to make sure they are easy to reach for a field trip during one day. They all already have a nice path and our field crew knew the area well. We went from north to south, where we have bus-communications.

Financing the project:

This project is financed by “Arvsfonden”. To be financed by Arvsfonden you automatically have that target group: *People with foreign background and people with disabilities*. None of the groups wants to be put together as an outsider group. Therefore, we choose to work close with those groups but when we talk - we talk about all of our children – nonspecific.

If we make the archipelago available for these groups we automatically make the step closer for others as well.

We want to reach out to children – all children – therefore we decided to reach out to them via schools. Different kinds of schools. Such as schools with many immigrants, schools in the suburbs, schools with children with special needs/disabilities. And of course “ordinary” schools. We offered them to apply as a **pilot school** in our project. By that I mean that I came to the school, talked about the project and what kind of help I needed from them. I also let the project take all the costs with busses, food etc. I also returned to school to have an evaluation talk both to students and teachers for a few times. We had to renew our activities many times after having those discussions witch was good.

Target group part of developing

We decided to **include the children as well as the teacher, from north to south**, in both testing the places and activities and evaluate together with us. That is also one of the demands from Arvsfonden (heritage foundation).



In our project we have developed:

For 3 years we have been working with this project and now we are “done” with most of it. Now the real work begins, reaching out to all other schools making sure they will use our education-spots on regular basis so the children will discover a new place to “hang out” in for recreation or adventure. And when they do we want them to feel comfortable and know how to act to keep the nature sustainable.

1. **Education material for students and teachers.** Including connections to the Swedish curriculum (läroplanen). Everything from the project on our website is available for people who uses screen readers (blind).

The education material is specific to each education spot and have its own theme. Baltic sea of course and:

The story of Edith at Gålö – the orphan girl who were placed here 100 years ago

Field studies between different types of water at Björnö – sweet and salt/sweet

Ecologic archipelago farming at Hjälmo – good for Biodiversity

Flora and fauna in Riddersholm – learn more about what you pass when you walk

2. Activities suitable for many, such as

Looking for animals in both water and land

Activities focusing on one’s senses (listening, feeling, looking, smelling and so on).

Activities about history, and thinking about your own situation comparing to someone else’s 100 years ago.

The Task – to become Baltic Sea Protector

The activities purposes is to create an curiosity and hopefully also connect the child to the area and its nature and let them explore new surroundings they can return to on their free time.

“we want to have exiting tasks, with missions”

“we want to make a difference, we want to be part of something”

3. Free local network including lots of facts. The same facts are available online to make sure the schools can prepare as much as they like. The films are all translated to sign language. We also have “welcome” films in different languages, with children from the project.

www.laguide.se/riddersholm

www.laguide.se/bjorno

www.laguide.se/galo

www.laguide.se/hjalmo

The script to our “welcome films” was created after working together with a young man from Somalia. I learned much about both his fear and joy of the nature, littering, feelings about new areas and not knowing how and what to do.

“Are you sure there are no crocodiles or snakes here in the water?”

“I love all the trees here in Sweden, they are kind, ours are dangerous”

“I thought only rich people could afford to be here, doesn’t it cost to walk here?”

“Where do we pay to come here?”



“Where I come from we all litter, its someone else’s job to pick it up, that’s normal”

4. Signs inspired of children and also together with children.

*The signs urge you to **do and see the surrounding** instead of telling you what you see. Neckless on trees – telling you the name of the tree.*

Signs also have QR codes if there is a film connected.

On one of our education spots we have a guided nature path where we tell the visitor through signs and films what flower they can see and what’s so special about it. Its summed in to easy sign language.

We have signs in shape of an eagle (in full size) and also an enlarged sea mussel as well as an enlarged barnacle, the students will find those in the water and they both have exciting stories. Good for young people with disabilities – they can feel and measure.

“We prefer signs in shape of the thing it’s supposed to tell us about”

“We want to interact, look for something and explore. We don’t want to read what we see, we want to see and figure out.”

5. Material to borrow.

Such as collection bag, magnifying glass, books about: animals, nature, the Baltic sea.

“Our school is poor, can we borrow material from you?”

6. A deal with a bus-company with a 10% discount.

In the project we have been working together:

- with “just arrived in Sweden” youngsters.
- with young children from grade 4-8
- with teachers
- with “rangers” (crew in the field) finding out what they would like to develop and also lifting their knowledge in the project.

“We want to participate for real, we want to make a difference”

“We can help”

“This project is fun because it’s something that will last”

We have put together children with professionals and we have all worked together, young and adults in a workshop:

- Editor
- Layout
- Film crew
- Journalist
- Marine biologist
- photographer
- artist



- Workshop (October in Nacka, creating films, art, signs and stories)
"Please Sandra, can we do this again? I had so much fun"
"I have never worked together with children like this, like a team, it's fantastic"

- Conference (Shamrock, evaluating activities, material and sharing ideas)
<https://vimeo.com/139237550>
- Evaluation meeting with students in schools (4 corner and such to discover the attraction of the activities and what needs to be more clear to understand)
"Sandra we know the story about Edith is not for real but it's ok, it's exiting anyway and interesting"
- Prepare-meeting with teachers (going to schools to discuss project with teachers)
- Having a summer worker from Somalia for a couple of weeks (learning what it's like to be new in the country, coming from a sometimes dangerous place).
- Engage young people as an "language-host"
"It's great to work with you, I have had so much fun, I have learned so much, I want to teach all other children how to enjoy the nature and how to take care of it"
<https://vimeo.com/166019627>

- Engage young people, and include their reflections from their homeland.
Where I come from they don't save the trees, they are needed for making fire.
Where I come from people litter everywhere – its awful. I learned how to sorter litter here in Sweden, I want to learn other.
Where I come from you have to pay to visit the nature, we were poor and could not afford it, I never went to school either.
Where I come from its dangerous in the nature, you could get hurt by animals.
Where I come from they develop too fast and don't save any nature – they build hotels everywhere.
Where I come from we have big areas with garbage.
We do not have those words you are saying – what do they mean?

I asked – what happens with the tax you pay?

"Hahahaha Sandra, the money goes to someone's pocket. Hahaha!"



What's next:

How do we make sure schools will use this ahead? We don't.

But we have channels to keep in contact.

- We can send e-mails inviting them to our areas including show the material
- We can offer a field-day for teachers every spring, to show how it works
- We have partners via nature schools in Haninge municipality, they will use it on regular basis
- We can use FB, Twitter, Instagram and our website
- We have our entrepreneurs that can use our material to attract groups.

"It was one of my best decisions to participate in this project, the children are so excited and so are we. I even got my school to spend money for new material and put money away for charter a bus every year. I love this" Monica Ormkärrskolan

*"This project has made fancy talk about **Integration in nature** for real – you have done it for real. You are an immigrant as well as me. The nature is for all of us, thank you" Aziza Framstegsskolan*



My advice:

Keep an open mind

*Include the target group while
developing*

*Work together and don't be
afraid to
"kill your darlings"*



From our website:

Our History

The Foundation was founded in 1959 when the future of the Stockholm archipelago seemed bleak. The population had been halved in the preceding 20 years. Schools and shops in the archipelago were closing down. Young people were moving to the mainland to find work. The resident of the islands was becoming older.

The county administrative board carried out a major inquiry, as did also the county council. For the first time, the government was persuaded to allocate regional development funds to a sparsely populated area in a county with an urban centre. The Archipelago Foundation can be seen as one of the first initiatives designed to bring new life to the archipelago. **Three of the most important players in the county were present at the founding meeting in 1959: the county administrative board, the county council, and the city of Stockholm.** All of the archipelago municipalities soon became active members of the Foundation, and subsequently all municipalities in the county.

Leisure areas and employment

The task of the Foundation was to reverse the negative trend. Outdoor leisure activities and recreation had started to attract attention, but the founding players agreed that the Foundation was not only to satisfy the recreational needs of people from the city and boat owners, but also the needs of the archipelago population for employment opportunities. The archipelago in this way acquired a totally new job title – the rangers!

Today, over 50 years later, the Archipelago Foundation owns approximately 12% of the archipelago, and manages more. The Foundation is the largest employer in the archipelago, with over 60 employees. Most of these work as rangers and conservation officers. In addition, hundreds of people work in the leased facilities in the Foundation's nature reserves, in such activities as hotels, hostels, inns, tourist cabins and guest harbours. All of the acquisitions of the Foundation have been carried out mainly to ensure that land is available for continued agriculture and conservation. At the same time, however, wide-ranging outdoor leisure activities have acquired land for wandering, while boat owners have acquired natural harbours and miles of beaches.

Renewal in 1998

A major renewal took place in 1998 when the Archipelago Foundation was restructured following a decision from Stockholm city to donate all of its lands in the archipelago to the Foundation. The amount of land owned was doubled overnight, and the Foundation acquired a large number of tourist facilities. These included the islands of Grinda, Finnhamn, Lidö, Rånö, Nättarö and the Gålö peninsula.

Mats Hulth and Bosse Ringholm, who had been involved in the transfer, said in association with the founding of the new foundation on 1 January 1998: *"The new Archipelago Foundation will form the basis for more long-term work for a living archipelago. The natural world will be conserved and those living in the archipelago will have new opportunities for making a living, fully in the spirit of ecotourism, while the new Archipelago Foundation will give everybody the chance to continue to explore the most beautiful archipelago in the world."*