

# Scandinavian Library Quarterly



No. 4. 2013



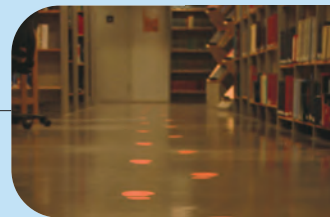
This issue

## **LIBRARY LEADERSHIP**

UPDATES ON PUBLIC AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN SCANDINAVIA

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- What is a leader and who is a good leader? Apparently Napoleon Bonaparte, the military and political leader who became the first emperor of France, said that "a leader is a dealer in hope." I think he might have had a point although he lived during the late 18th and early 19th century, when the concept of a what makes a good leader probably was much different from today – or, as former leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi, is said to have put it: "I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people."

This issue of SLQ deals with library leadership and although our articles don't provide an exact answer to my question above, they hopefully offer inspiration and ideas for further reflection.



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# Citius, altius, library leader

Leadership is needed to enable an organization to get where it wants to go. Although the duties are the same, leadership has, however, changed in libraries in recent years and decades. The library is one of the largest organizations among public institutions, there are numerous staff members to supervise who are more heterogeneous than before and many of whom do more independent work than before.



Päivi Jokitalo

The goals are higher and the infrastructure is more confined. The rate of change in the operational environment is quick. Specialist work and the demand for related innovations necessitate the staff's independence and self-guidance; financiers demand efficiency and performance. Coordinating all of this requires leadership in a specialist organization.

Change management is not always enough when you are dealing with a new type of organization: municipal mergers, organizational mergers or, as in Denmark, the formation of a new unit from two previously separate functions: the library and civil service.

## Courage to delegate and supervise

Different processes require skills, but not necessarily the same skills in the same proportion. Furthermore, it is no longer enough to be able to supervise your own staff and work together with the decision-makers of the skeleton organization; rather, leadership must take into consideration patrons, volunteers and partners. As Ann Poulsen states in her article, the more patrons are heard, the more explicit the library's priorities must be to them.

A single leader at the top of the organization cannot do this alone, and, indeed, leadership in libraries takes place on many levels and among many participants. The chief librarian is not the only

leader. The teams need leaders, activities supervised – the same is true for communication, marketing and even information. The leader must have the courage to delegate activities to others.

As a leader in middle management of a local library, Solveig Storbom's experiences in leadership in a local library in Helsinki depict the situation of many leaders in the Nordic countries. The immediate supervisor, who listens and stands behind his/her subordinates makes things happen in the everyday work routine.

## Motivation of staff

The leader is at the disposal of the staff. "In all processes of change, the employees are most concerned about themselves and their future, and in these circumstances the immediate supervisor has an immense responsibility to ensure the staff can cope well and stays motivated."

In small organizations, the leader may not always have a supervisor supporting him/her, and in this case the peer support of colleagues may be helpful. This type of community emerged in the further training offered to leaders in libraries.

“Indeed, leadership in libraries takes place on many levels and among many participants.”

## Replace control with trust

Leaders must support and encourage their staff, justify the need for resources and convince decision-makers. Satisfied patrons should be offered the same services as before, and new patron groups something all-new. There are many types of demands: develop the library, establish maker space, offer the community its own space, empower patrons, remember partners.

One thing is true for all leaders – you have to be able to create an atmosphere of trust and you have to be able to communicate. Most importantly, you have to be interested in people. As it is stated elsewhere in this magazine, “give up the control and replace it with trust.”

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# Insight-based leadership

There are two basic models that apply to the thinking on leadership. One model regards leadership as a subject in its own right and as a separate area of competency. Whoever can manage a bank can also manage other types of organization from a hospital to a library. We may call this the organizational leader model. The other model emphasizes the need to have a professional background in the core business of the organization that one is to lead. The head of a bank should come from and have skills related to the banking profession, and the head of a hospital should come from the health professions. We may call this model the professional leader model.



Ragnar Audunson

Should the organizational leader model or the professional leader model be employed as the basis for recruiting to important positions in the library sector? The recent recruitment of a new head of the Deichmanske bibliotek (Oslo Public Library) has brought this issue into focus.

This is undoubtedly one of the most important leadership positions in the Norwegian library administration. It was of course from his position as head of the Deichmanske bibliotek that Håkon Nyhus introduced the modern model for public libraries in Oslo, Norway and the Nordic countries.

The person who will *now* take over the position which Nyhus used so creatively and effectively in terms of library policy, can be the person who develops and expands the public library concept to make it relevant in the digital, multicultural age – provided that the person who has been given the job has sufficient insight into the founding ideals and role of public libraries to lead such a process of development and adaptation.

To lead a public library into and through the kind of change process that public libraries in general, but the Deichmanske bibliotek in particular, are currently in the

midst of, requires a deep understanding of *the nature* of a public library. That is the basis for developing a vision of what the library can be.

## A new leadership concept

Over the past few years much has been made of knowledge-based practice and knowledge-based leadership in many areas. Or results-oriented leadership. Or change leadership. I would suggest a new term: *insight-based* leadership.

Insight – that is, knowledge and proficiency combined with a capacity for reflection based on that proficiency in one's field. Knowledge, proficiency and understanding cannot be without context; they must be embedded in the business or activity that one is to lead.

Leadership in research requires insight into the essence of research; leadership in education requires insight into the essence of education; leadership in health requires insight into the essence of the health professions, and so on. In the same way leadership of a public library requires insight into the essence of public libraries.

Now, it is not necessarily the case that someone with a bachelor's or master's degree in library and information science

will have the knowledge, proficiency and deep understanding that insight-based leadership requires. Each one of us may well have experienced that this correlation does not always exist.

Nevertheless, it is probably true that the opportunity to reflect on the character and basis of library and information science as a discipline through a three or five year bachelor's or master's degree course, provides the best platform for developing such proficiency. Why is this the case?

## A basis of core values and ideas

The primary task of a chief librarian is to be the person best placed to define the future role and remit of the library in the municipality – she or he must be the person who, in terms of the library profession and library policy, is in a position to think most deeply and most accurately. This requires a basis of core values and ideas.

When Håkon Nyhus arrived from the USA to implement the modern public library model in Norway, his core basis was not that of general management theory; it was that of the developing professional field of public libraries. It was exactly this core basis that enabled him to become the epoch-making chief librarian that he



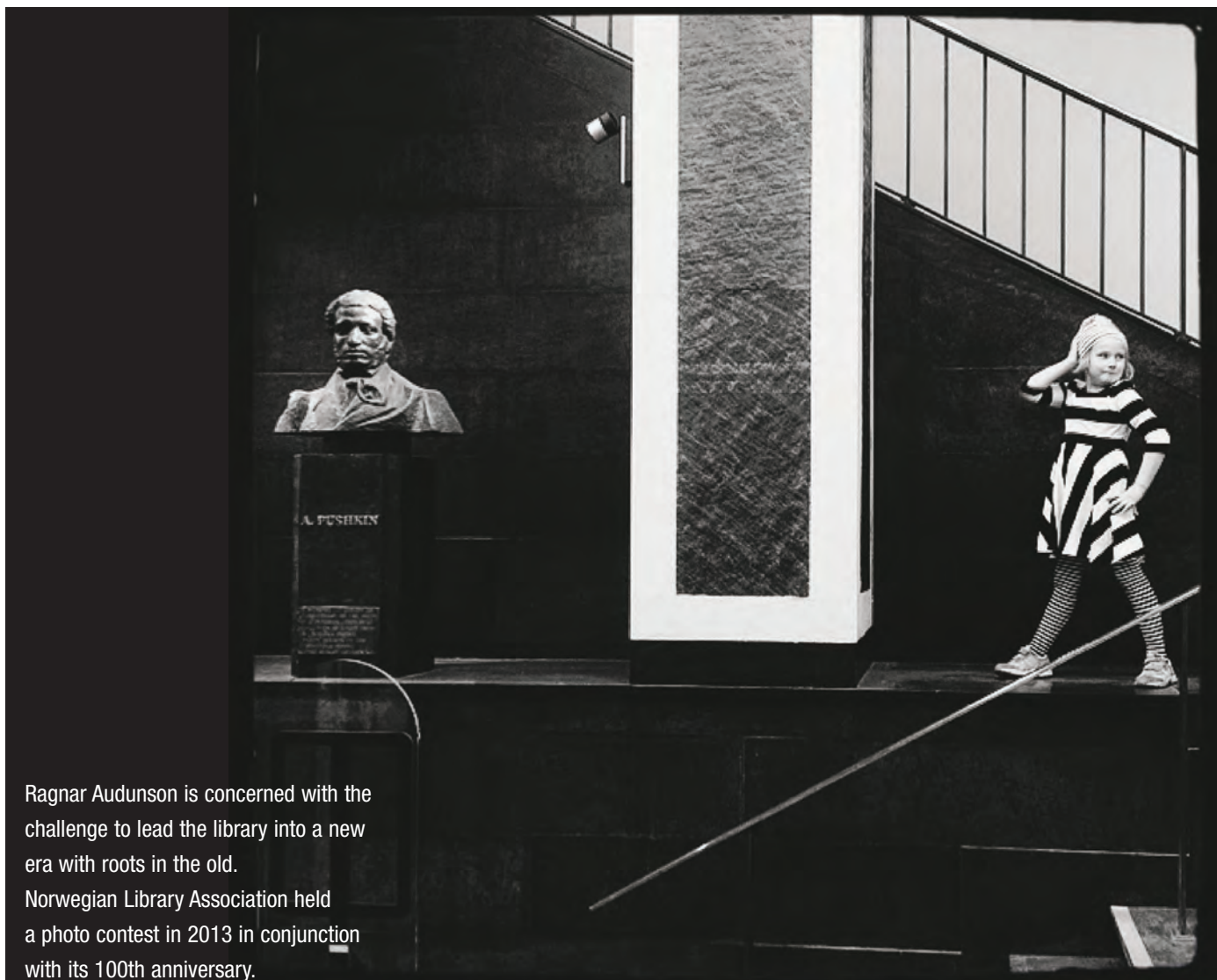
“Leadership of a public library requires insight into the essence of public libraries.”

indeed became. It is therefore wrong to say that a chief librarian of a large public library does not need to have a background in professional librarianship, because there will be so many others in a large library like this who do. And it is wrong to say that first and foremost a chief librarian must have leadership competencies.

### **Solid professional basis**

In matters relating to the profession, he or she can of course lean upon the strong professional environment that exists in a large system, such as the Deichmanske bibliotek. But is it not precisely the task of the leader first and foremost to be the one to define the strategy for library policy and for the profession? Not common visions and values to do with generosity, openness and respect, but a genuine vision and strategy for library policy?

Is it not his or her task, first and foremost, to explain to politicians and public authorities what a contemporary library has to offer? And can these leadership tasks be performed without a solid professional basis? Of course not. Leadership that is not embedded in the profession means no *library* leadership at all.



Ragnar Audunson is concerned with the challenge to lead the library into a new era with roots in the old.

Norwegian Library Association held a photo contest in 2013 in conjunction with its 100th anniversary.

This first prize photo shows the combination of tradition and renewal which also is the situation of today's library.

Photo: Elisabeth Tindeland

Now, we naturally cannot exclude the possibility that someone may attain this type of professionalism without having followed the well-trodden path of the profession with a bachelor's and master's degree in the field. However, that cannot be the general rule.

### The statesman dimension

A classic work on organizational and leadership theory is Philip Selznick's *Leadership in Administration*, in which Selznick describes what we may define as the statesman dimension of leadership. It primarily means that the leader is in a

position to ensure that what constitutes the particular institution – what makes the public library a public library – survives and can be carried on in a rapidly changing reality.

This requires insight-based leadership. A leader who merely knows leadership theory and has no deep understanding of the nature of a particular type of institution will never be able to exercise this statesman dimension of leadership.

### Future threats and opportunities

The public libraries are now in a situation where the need for leaders who can fulfil precisely this statesman dimension of leadership is greater than it has ever been since Nyhus implemented his library revolution. Present-day developments have many aspects that may threaten the value

base of the institution of public libraries and make it seem irrelevant.

But these same developments are also creating completely new opportunities for public libraries to appear relevant and meaningful – if the profession can manage to develop its value base and adapt it to the new challenges.

For that, we need insight-based leadership.

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Portrait photo: Odd Letnes

# How I became something I wasn't supposed to be - a leader

I am one of the many chief librarians who were never supposed to become a leader. When I was a young assistant, I was just suddenly promoted first to a department librarian and then to branch librarian. At the time, there was a shortage of librarians, and the number of applicants applying for managing positions was even smaller than it is now.



Solveig Stormbom

Being a leader felt awkward at first, because I wasn't oriented towards such a position and most of my subordinates were older and more experienced than I was. Little by little, I developed and began to actually like some of the job's different aspects.

I didn't receive any training in the beginning; rather, I just had to find the right perspective for doing the job. I began to realize that my strengths lie expressly in human resources, not so much in strategies and visions which I gladly let other people handle, and still do.

## Knowledge and role models

I later received training in leadership. However, the best training has taken place when I have watched other leaders work.

I have seen leaders who have not been very good, others who have been good and others who have been extremely poor.

You learn the most from poor leaders! At least you know what NOT to do. Good leadership is varied and related to personality; indeed you can learn from the example of good leaders and apply it to your own personality. In the end it's personality with which you lead your subordinates.

## Leaders make things happen

In my opinion, the most important issue in leadership is to recognize your own areas of strength and then gravitate to duties that suit you the best. Since I see myself, first and foremost, as an enabler and human resource manager, a position in middle management suits my personality best, despite the lower rate of pay.

Sometimes I feel like I'm really boring among all of the visionaries and strategists, but on the other hand I strongly believe that the staff values an immediate superior, one who is 'present', listens and stands behind his/her subordinates.

The immediate superior has an enormous responsibility to ensure the staff is able to cope well and stays motivated. When necessary, a superior must be able to give commands, but above all must find spirit and substance, together with the staff members, for the everyday work.

I feel that the best way to succeed is to listen carefully to your subordinates and offer them the best possible circumstances to do their work and utilize their expertise. Everyone has their own duty and place in a work community, although, indeed, flexibility is the basis of all success.

There is always someone on holiday, on sick leave or in training. This calls for flexibility from all of the members in the work community, and it is the duty of the supervisor to ensure that it happens.

## I would never do anything else

Leadership is at times tremendously fun and at times extremely strenuous. However, I would never do anything else. It is often rewarding also, and always challenging and interesting. You should never slacken, but you should also avoid too much stress. You should leave your concerns and grief at work, although it is, of course, not always possible.

You also have to take care of yourself and make sure you are able to cope. An exhausted and irritable supervisor is no good and no fun for anyone. If peer support is available, you should take advantage of it.

For those, who are thinking about becoming a superior, I say, "Go ahead!" Take a bold leap into the unknown – I'm sure it will be rewarding.

Solveig Stormbom  
Chief Librarian

Kannelmäki Library / Helsinki City Library



Former director of a university library, Catharina Isberg now manages a public library facility.  
Photo: Annika Hjerpe

# From academic to public



Anika Hjerpe

The fundamental core value of the citizen's right to information distinguishes libraries from other types of operations. The democratic spirit is especially prevalent in public libraries but is noted in the personnel manning other types of libraries as well. Library director Catharina Isberg believes in a more generous approach to values sharing between different types of libraries, since they can learn so much from each other.

In September 2013, Catharina Isberg left her decade-long posting as Deputy Library Director at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to become Library Director at Helsingborg Public Library. SLQ has asked her a few questions about library leadership.

**What is different in being the director of an academic library and a public library?**

“The biggest difference is the target group; in a public library you must address everyone. The assignment itself is also very different. In a public library you must think broader, so that what you do will suit a lot of people. Meanwhile you must also focus, pinpoint certain target groups to concentrate on, to avoid the risk of having no certain focus at all without focus on anyone.”

“Another big difference is the economic conditions. I have gone from heading a company library to an academic library, and now onward to a public library. The economic conditions have deflated more

and more with each step. But, you have the ideas and they always surpass the resources, and therefore, you must prioritize.”

**What similarities have you found?**

“One consistency is the big wave of change that takes place in the shift to more digital libraries. The change is massive, and also involves changing common user perceptions of what a library is. I think that, by now, the perception has already changed amongst library staff. This new perception is a lot about the digital library and the idea that, although there is an internet, everything on it is not available for free and so the need for libraries remains constant.”

**What do you miss?**

“I miss my colleagues the most, but it sort of feels good that everything in the public library does not need to be research related, there is a much greater sense of practice-makes-perfect within the public libraries.”

**What is new?**

“Political governance and how you relate to it, where the limits are between decisions you could execute and the course you will implement. Within academic libraries there is also political governance, but not as rigorous.”

**Do you bring something from the academic world that you are able to use in the public library?**

“Academic libraries have got much further with digital media; they have been used much more by researchers, largely because they make use of a lot of scientific journals. In public libraries there is a greater focus on books, but there are now more and more e-books.”

**The public library in Helsingborg**

The city has 132,011 residents and is Sweden's ninth largest municipality. The library is part of Library Northwest Skåne including ten other public libraries.

In early 2013 the Cultural Committee and Regional Growth Committee adopted a joint strategy to develop entrepreneurship in cultural and creative industries with the target to become Europe's most innovative region in 2020.



The public library in Helsingborg in southern Sweden  
Photo: Helsingborg Public Library



Photo: The library at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp, near Malmö in southern Sweden. The university is working with development of learning and expertise in areas concerning biological resources and biological production. A total of 3,080 people are currently employed at the university.  
Photo: Swedish University Alnarp



Photo: Swedish University Alnarp

“It is important to clarify what media is, and transmedia. In the future, a book will not merely be a book, it will be completely different, although books, as we know them now, will also remain as they are for a long time. In the future, media will be much more mixed, there will be more participation. Even if you and I read the same book, it may be different because we choose different paths. It can be a web page where, when you have read a passage, you get different options and can continue on different tracks.”

“The roles we play will change, anyone can be an author. This week in Helsingborg public library, we have workshops with children who create iPad stories using both text and images to create short films that we post on YouTube.

This touches on something that is important for librarians to know; how to post things on the internet and copyright issues. The children’s parents must sign an agreement, saying that it is OK that their children’s films are posted on YouTube.”

“A very important challenge for the future digital library is exerting independence from the filter bubble. When you for example google something, say “Egypt”, you might get hits on seaside resorts and vacation, while my first hit might be the Arabic spring. The search results depend on what you have searched for before. In the library this becomes problematic when librarians search for information for someone else; the ideal is to get validated results when

you know what you have searched for. Not only Google does this, and it makes it easy to believe that everyone is thinking like yourself, it does not expand your world.”

**Is there any difference in the challenges or problems that the academic libraries and the public libraries are facing?**

“I think both must justify their own existence, but this need is stronger for public libraries. They must ably demonstrate their own benefit. It is extremely important that libraries house the expertise with enough staff to arrange activities and continue an ongoing dialogue about challenges and possibilities in the digital world. To me, the staff is essential, it is not enough to have an open library building; it must also be filled with the content that the staff brings to it.”

**Which is the biggest issue for academic libraries right now?**

The pedagogic role as well as Open Access (OA). There are big differences and the pedagogic role and the OA-movement did put the academic libraries on a different track. Public libraries do not have an equally significant mission of pedagogics, but there is a need for it and there is also reason to think about how public libraries can work with OA.

**Which is the biggest issue for public libraries right now?**

“I would say it is about the broad sell of the use of fiction, the reading of literary works, that it allows

you to enter new worlds. If we in the Western World only continue to read Western literature, we will continue to see the world from a Western point of view, but if we read literature from other parts of the world, we will broaden our perspective. This is also important from an equal terms perspective; I think that, for example, business leaders need to read fiction to widen their perspective on inequality. I mean inequality between classes, the sexes, religion and also LGBTQ-issues: To see people without seeing skin color, gender or religion.”

**“ Librarians have professional expertise in handling media and research information and in how to look at sources in a critical way, as a counterweight to the filter bubble struggle.**

*Link to iPad stories  
<http://biblioteksnv.se/web/arena/helsingborg/ipadsagor>*

Annika Hjerpe  
 Press and Communication Officer  
 National Library of Sweden

# Change and leadership

The reform of the Universities Act in Finland has had an immense impact on leadership in libraries. Library directors are required to have a new type of leadership competence, which emphasizes financial management and change management. The focus of the library director's work is shifting from knowledge-based leadership to professional leadership.



Ulla Nygrén

In the last decades, libraries have been used to operating in a continuously changing environment and as the target of many types of demands for change. One of the most significant factors changing the operational environment is, of course, the development of information technology and its impact on not only research and learning, but also on the work carried out in libraries.

In addition, other societal changes, which are reflected in reforms to legislation, strongly influence the operational prerequisites of and leadership in libraries.

A new *Universities Act* became effective January 1, 2010. Significant reforms included a reduction in the number of universities, changes in their judicial status from government institutions to independent legal entities, as well as changes in financing and management protocol. It was one of the greatest reforms in the history of the university institution, the aim of which was to increase the independence of universities. The purpose was also to reinforce leadership in universities.

## Knowledge-based to professional

The development in universities triggered by the changes in the legal and financial status has modified the work of library directors and created new demands on competence. Knowledge-based leadership, which is based on competence in the management of the library profession, is no longer sufficient.

Nowadays, the operational environment calls for skills that are characteristic of professional leaders. The independent status of universities and the need for economic stability have led to a more extensive evaluation of operations based on financial premises than previously. For this reason, understanding the significance of economic factors has become more important in library leadership than before.

By generalizing a bit we could say that a library is no longer a self-evident part of a university; rather, like other infrastructures, it is regarded as an investment, the achieved benefit of which the university compares to the exerted contribution.

Indeed, a library director must possess the ability to follow and analyze the economy of the organization he or she manages and demonstrate that the processes and services are economically sound and efficient. He or she should also be prepared to critically examine the cost structure as well as to cost-effectively develop the organization and operational protocols.

The competences mentioned above are, however, only part of a leader's professional skill. When changes extend to the organizational structure, processes and job duties, the leaders in the library must have the ability to carry out reforms as successfully as possible for all of those involved.

Organizational reforms usually progress gradually and have an extensive impact – meaningful change takes years. This type of change, which seems to be constant, is demanding for both the staff and the supervisors and requires the library leaders to invest into the management of the various parts of the change. Change mana-

gement is perhaps the most indispensable skill needed in the university library at the moment.

**Change management**

During the last four years, many projects involving change have been initiated at the Turku University Library. When the Turku School of Economics and the University of Turku merged in 2010, two separate libraries also merged. This meant not only the unification of administration and IT systems, but also the fusing of two separate organizational cultures.

In conjunction with this, the entire library organization was thoroughly reformed. Seven separate faculty libraries were combined into three disciplinary libraries, and the centralization of the internal operations serving the entire library, such as the financial and IT system services, began.

The development work has continued in a project, initiated by the University President, involving administrative structures and processes within the entire university. The aim of the project is to streamline administrative and support services and reduce costs. Within the framework of these aims, it has been the library’s job to form a vision of the Turku University Library in the year 2016, i.e. to delineate the ideal operational protocol for the part of library premises, types of services, need for competence, staff structure and smooth operational processes.

The vision has been prepared in a committee comprising the university community and representatives from the library. The basis of the committee’s work is the need for services: the committee carefully considered why the university needs a library and what types of services patrons want. The vision includes expectations and goals that, when initiated, will deeply impact the structure and operations of the library.

The most essential goal in development is to invest in specialist services, many of which are new services supporting research. To achieve the set goals, the library must reinforce its core expertise and modify its staff structure to respond to the needs for expertise. The on-going organi-



zational reform will result in the distribution of discipline-specific specialist services into the disciplinary libraries, and the library’s internal services, such as acquisition and metadata services, will be concentrated in the Main Library, which will turn into an internal service center.

**Leadership is tested**

There are many expectations associated with the upcoming changes. The university’s administration expects economic efficiency, effectiveness and a decrease in costs, patrons expect relevant information and smooth-running services, and the staff expects job security and meaning in what they do. It is typical in circumstances of change that top management has to work at the core of many, sometimes contradicting, expectations.

Leadership expert Professor John P. Kotter, of Harvard Business School, says,

“Transforming an organization is the ultimate test of leadership.” For a leader, change gives the opportunity to develop, sometimes painstakingly, genuine leadership – to be a pioneer, motivator and seeker of opportunity even when the organization is forced to adapt its operations to dwindling resources.

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# Merger management - a challenging prospect

●  
Tove Bang

Aarhus School of Business, ASB merged with Aarhus University in 2007. Aarhus University is Denmark's second largest university with about 43,500 students and 12,500 employees. Tove Bang was in charge of a merging of ASB Library with the university's 19 institute libraries up until September 2012, where a new merged AUL Library became a reality. The merger process lasted five years. The article is based on experiences from this process.



“ Even if you have been in charge before, you have to find your way in a completely new context moving from a large to an even larger organization including a new name and logo ...

Mergers in the public sector in Denmark have been top of the agenda over the past few years. Ministries, universities, schools and libraries merge incessantly. Mergers between public institutions, for example between educational institutions or libraries are often sparked off by a political decision that hopes to obtain critical mass, efficiency cuts or a wish to gather together the competences in *one* place instead of at several addresses.

Experience also shows that successful mergers are not at all easy to achieve, some actually fail. In more than half the completed public mergers, the leader responsible is either sacked or chooses to hand in notice during or shortly after the merger.

This situation encourages the view that these mergers generate particularly difficult conditions for management, conditions that demand specific insight and some human competences as well as a special flair in terms of staff and management skills, which many leaders in the public sector might not possess.

### Not change management

Some public leaders have certainly gained experience of carrying out larger or smaller change processes in organisations over a period of time, concurrently with the technological conversion. However, fewer leaders by far have tried themselves to face a process of change as radical and demanding as a merger.

By merger I understand an ‘amalgamation of two or more institutions/libraries and their different organisation cultures, where the primary aim of the merger is to create *one* new common organisation/library based on *one* new common energy’.

Being in charge of a merger is a difficult, but at the same time exciting challenge, which you do not necessarily master, because you are an experienced change manager. Even if you have been in charge before, you have to find your way in a completely new context.

This may well present some restrictions in comparison to what you have been used to in previous jobs, but also many new possibilities. It is therefore a good idea to

use the situation to draw up the lines on the pitch you are going to play on. You have to give yourself plenty of time to examine all the possibilities and limitations that might be inherent in the job, before making a start and meeting the staff.

### Profile of the merger manager

As a leader, you must be able to be at the forefront when initiatives are to be taken. You have to be able to develop and maintain the culture through the actions you decide to launch. Naturally, it is also important that as leader you are sufficiently equipped with professional knowledge and management tools, which will enable you to handle the entire process.

In most cases by far, the leader is simultaneously also part of the merger him/herself and therefore experiences personally – to a greater or lesser extent – the same needs and frustrations as those which the members of staff will encounter.

In my opinion, the ideal merger manager is at one and the same time a professional

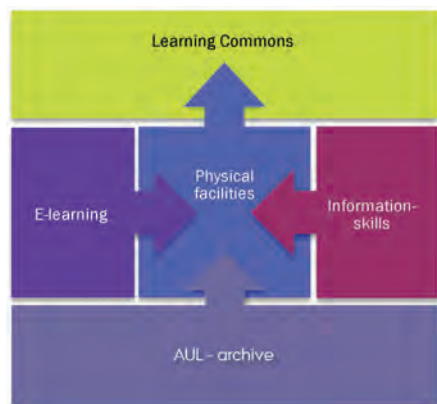
In connection with the merger process Aarhus School of Business was renovated and got new interior facilities and buildings for teaching and studying >



✓ **The new merged AUL Library**  
*Aarhus University Libraries* is the official name of all libraries at Aarhus University including the State and University Library.

They work together to provide library services to all employees and students at Aarhus University with 19 service locations + the State and University Library.

Besides the service locations there are a large number of minor libraries at the respective research institutes.



The basic layout on the new organisation

person, whose example the professional members of staff can follow and a professional leader with some well-developed meta competences in management, which ensure that you keep a cool head while at the same time being visionary and seeing possibilities for the department and its staff.

Nevertheless, at the same time a leader must also be able to get quite close to the staff, support them in their opinion shaping, and work on formulating and reaching the more immediate objectives of the individual member of staff and of the department as a whole.

#### **Be open and visible**

As leader of merger processes it is essential quickly to realize what kind of leadership space one is afforded; that is to say – the objectives, success criteria and framework within which the merger project should be solved. The stronger your perception of this space, the better equipped you are to inform the staff and to handle the situation, if you are met with criticism or frustrations.

It is important to establish good relations with the staff. As a leader, it is therefore a good idea to be open, both about the knowledge you actually have, and about the knowledge you do not possess.

The staff need to know the thoughts and expectations of the leader in relation to the future of the new organisation and to the contribution that each member should make. They want to share the leader's deliberations as to what is going to happen in the future, so that they get the opportunity to decode the values on which the leader bases his/her actions.

The more visible you are able to appear as a leader during this part of the merger process, the less room there will be for guesswork and rumours to occur among the staff.

#### **A difficult balance**

It is important that the person in charge of the merger is both visible and approachable during the whole process of change. You have to lead the way as motivator and role model, so that the staff at all times are aware of the objective of the merger.



You have to be prepared to make the necessary decisions during the process, even if they are unpopular. And you must all along the way endeavour to include the members of staff in the central parts of the process to make them feel that they have real influence on the decisions that are made.

It is quite natural that they have a great personal need to understand why the changes are necessary, what they are leading to, and when they must be completed. In the case of the members of staff, it is primarily a question of how the changes will affect each individual personally, which role they are going to play in the new organisation and what kind of competences they will have to acquire in order to keep their job.

The leader must also be prepared continuously to handle the staff's personal worries and make sure to create a space where they can speak freely and say what is worrying them. When they have sorted out what has to do with the more personal worries, they quite automatically begin to concern themselves about how the imple-

mentation of the changes is going to happen: will I have to change to another department? Do I get completely new colleagues? Et cetera.

### **Mergers take time**

During the various phases of worry, the leader has to be a spearhead and keep repeating the objectives of the merger, so that the background and purpose of the process of change remain clear to everyone.

Objectives and action plans must time and again be communicated to the staff in a form they understand and in the context of which they can see themselves. It is also essential for the leader to radiate an amount of enthusiasm and optimism that will induce the staff to believe absolutely in the objectives and results of the merger. It is not least during this phase that the leader will really have to balance between a great number of different considerations.

It often takes a long time for a merger to be completed and for a new organisation to move into a regular 'groove' with new

routines. But it is also important to bear in mind that a merger process should not be too long.

Even if the process is not completely finished and routines not quite established, I recommend that you choose a suitable time to put a full stop to the process and take stock. Tell the members of staff, that the merger is now considered completed – and then turn your mind to the future!

Former Library Director  
Tove Bang M.LI.Sc.  
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# Community centres as laboratory for management



Ann Poulsen

Experiments with transforming a number of Danish libraries into acting as community centres show that community centres make special demands on both staff and management, as they are based on user involvement, partnerships and help from volunteers with a large number of activities that are sought after by the users.



Citizens at Vollsmose community center. Vollsmose is one of 16 community centers in Denmark.  
Photo: Nils Lund

This article is based on interviews with managers from three community centres – Hanne Ahrenkiel, manager of the community centre in Nivå, Jytte Bræmer, library director in Fredericia and Kathrine Winther Adelsparre, manager at the community centre Hedemarken – who have shared their thoughts on how to tackle the management task.

The relevant skills as planner, co-ordinator, facilitator, fundraiser, ‘jack of all trades’, fireball, as well as the ability to orchestrate relations, be personal without getting too close, to solve conflicts, create and maintain networks, possess intercultural and communicative competences, be project-oriented and possess performative skills, are not the most obvious characteristics of the traditional librarian. And the fact is that the staff in the libraries’ community centres often have a non-librarian educational background.

### A lightning rod

It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that the staff represent a diversity that guarantees the presence of the skills mentioned. The leader must therefore focus on what different gender, professional capabilities and ethnic background may mean. At the same time, it is the leader’s task to make it visible to the staff that a community centre is about being where the users are, and to make sure that all members of staff are involved.

As it is sometimes conflict-ridden for the staff to enter into many relations on a daily basis with users, volunteers and partners, it is the presence of the leader and his/her knowledge of the work that is the decisive factor.

During the day-to-day work, it is necessary for the leader to act as lightning rod and sparring partner for the members of staff. It is therefore also important that the leader has a network to the partners’ managements, so that any disagreement about the collaboration can be dealt with

at top level, and the staff can concentrate on the daily work without any frictions.

Finally, the leader must be able to delegate to the staff. Hanne Ahrenkiel from the community centre in Nivå, a fairly small town in Northern Zealand, tells for example of a club for fathers in the community centre, which could not function without an employee with an ethnic background other than Danish. This employee, not the leader, possesses the competencies and the freedom to manage the club.

### User involvement

Involving users and volunteers means that management must let go of the control and replace it by trust. In the words of Hanne Ahrenkiel: “We think we know, but we do not always know”. When you succeed in involving the users, the benefit is that to a great extent they assume responsibility and contribute with ideas for arrangements and activities.

But involving the users may also mean that their wishes and requests, for various reasons, cannot be fulfilled. This might present a challenge to management in terms of explaining the chosen prioritizations.

There is general agreement that collaboration with volunteers is rewarding for both volunteers and members of staff. Often the volunteers act as ambassadors for the library. But at the same time, it is beginning to be recognized that management of volunteers is an independent task, which might not necessarily belong at top-level management.

The task can be equally well handled by one or several members of staff. At Hedemarken they call it “Hosting voluntariness”. As regards management of volunteers, it is very much a question of setting out a framework within which the volunteers can plan their work. One must balance expectations at a level where these can be met, and here the operative word is – dialogue.

### A challenge to resources

One prerequisite for a well-functioning community centre is local collaborations and partnerships. Kathrine Winther Adelsparre, from the community centre Hedemarken, says that the forming of partnerships requires decision-making authority at management level, as the choice of partners is based on a number of strategic considerations.

Jytte Bræmer, library director in Fredericia, in addition points out that collaboration with other parties can contribute to making some of the existing, and valuable, competences among the library’s staff, more visible – not least the ability to organize and implement projects and activities.

### Increase in visitors

Generally speaking, the libraries that have been transformed into community centres, experience an increase in visiting figures, and sometimes also in loans. The increased visiting figure in the community centre Hedemarken has necessitated a managerial prioritization of the resources, which i.a. has been solved by letting non-library educated staff do duties at the circulation desk. At Hedemarken the loan figure has risen from 27,000 in 2007 to 60,000 in October 2013.

As developments in the other public libraries are often also challenged by integration with others partners and broad collaboration, such as has happened in the community centres, it is obvious to see community centres as laboratories where in many ways you gain experiences in developing forms of collaboration in the library – also as regards library management.

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## FACTS ON COMMUNITY CENTRES IN DENMARK

From 2008-2012, 16 community centres were established in Denmark in libraries located in marginalized residential areas. These areas are i.a. characterized by unemployment, poor educational level and many residents with ethnic background other than Danish.

What the community centres aim to achieve with i.a. housing associations, organisations and municipal partners, is to create informal services for the residents. This could for example be language cafés or health information. The centres’ offers are often a response to the users’ wishes and

include volunteers help to carry them out. In 2013 PhD. Kristian Delica from Roskilde University has evaluated the results of the work in the community centres and describes it as a success:  
<http://informationr.net/ir/18-3/colis/paperC14.html>

# Enjoying work

She is a woman. She is creative and a problem-solver, and in spite of inconvenient working hours and few colleagues, she enjoys her work. When 170 chief librarians from all over Norway gathered recently at Holmenkollen Park Hotel in Oslo, the agenda included some highlights from a doctoral degree project in progress.

Elin Tinholt

Ane Landøy of the University of Bergen Library has reached the final stage of her PhD at the University of Copenhagen's Royal School of Library and Information Science. At Holmenkollen Park Hotel an attentive audience was served brand-new figures about their own daily work.

In autumn 2011, Ane Landøy sent an electronic questionnaire to all libraries in Norway with the aim of acquiring greater knowledge about library management. In the questionnaire the chief librarians were asked about what challenges they foresaw in the future, decision processes at the workplace, management and management roles in the near future, their relations with 'external' actors, and to what extent they experienced job satisfaction, and suchlike.

A total of 244 answers distributed over the entire library field were returned: 12 from county libraries, 153 from public libraries and 79 from academic libraries. In addition to the comprehensive questionnaire, Ane Landøy interviewed eleven chief librarians from different parts of Norway.

## Happy at work

The responses showed that chief librarians generally enjoy their work. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 was "very satisfied" and 1 was "dissatisfied", approximately half answered that they were very satisfied with their job. None of those asked were dissatisfied.

How do you interpret this? Is it true that chief librarians are really so satisfied with their job?

Ane Landøy is sitting in a low lounge chair in the reception area. Around us the clink of coffee cups and quiet conversation. She has put down a pile of papers, her mobile phone and her wallet. Soon she will leave behind the foggy surroundings of the hotel and take a flight to Bergen. But first she has taken the time for a quick chat.

"The fact that chief librarians are satisfied with their job tallies with the satisfaction we see generally among managers in Norway. The recently published survey of managers – *Livet som leder* (Life as a leader, Fagbokforlaget publishing house), which is based on responses from a range of managers in the public and private sectors, shows that managers generally enjoy their jobs. That's not to say that there are never any difficulties. In many libraries the financial situation is a recurring challenge and source of frustration. One chief librarian I talked to had run an exciting reading competition for several summers. It was a popular competition and it encouraged young people to read more. This year she couldn't afford to buy the prizes that were needed, and the popular reading campaign had to be cancelled. That was a blow to her. At many of the smaller libraries in particular, money is tight. Around 100 public libraries countrywide have less than one Full Time Equivalent. Then you

have no colleagues and you're your own boss. Many of these work actively in conjunction with their colleagues in nearby municipalities. A number of them work in part-time positions – 60 or 80 percent. In reality they actually work 100 percent because the job demands it. They often have inconvenient working hours, and work several evenings a week. None of those I talked to complained about this, but of course you undoubtedly reflect on it."

## Diversity and creativity

In addition to the high satisfaction level, Ane Landøy was also positively surprised by the diversity and creativity shown in libraries everywhere.

"The libraries are skilled at picking up

## SOME FACTS ON LIBRARIES I NORWAY


### Population

- 5 million inhabitants
- 429 municipalities
- 19 counties

### Public libraries

- 2,449 employees
- 1,765 full time equivalents/FTEs (many part time positions)
- 55 % FTEs are trained librarians
- 73 % of the municipalities have a trained library director
- 353 municipalities have less than 5 FTEs

*Library statistics 2012, National library of Norway*

A portrait of Ane Landøy, a woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a white collared shirt. She is smiling slightly. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

“ Perhaps librarianship studies should offer a management development programme including subjects such as finance, statistics, lobbying, marketing and human resources?”

Ane Landøy has conducted research on library management in Norway and has been impressed by the diversity and creativity shown.  
Photo: National Library of Norway

good ideas from others and then employing them in their own library,” she says. “Moreover, it was gratifying that so many reported that the country libraries are perceived as a strong support for the local public libraries. The academic libraries are a bit isolated from this. They collaborate on a national as well as an international basis. Perhaps there is a potential for more cooperation between the academic libraries and the public libraries,” Landøy muses. “I believe that this would enrich both parties.”

#### Many small libraries

“Even though there are of course a lot of things that chief librarians can’t have an impact on, like opening times and funding, they do have quite a lot of influence on their own working day. It’s seen as positive that you can choose your own focus. And libraries are a ‘protected’ area to a large extent. Most people agree that we must have libraries. This is an anchor that provides security and freedom.”

Ane Landøy tells us that she was surprised that we had so many small libraries in Norway.

“In the last issue of *NB21*, the National

Library’s magazine, there were several articles about open, self-service libraries. Maybe a library offering self-service periods would be a good solution for many of the smaller libraries. The option of extending opening times for smaller libraries is positive, first and foremost for the borrowers but also perhaps for the many employees who could then cut back on their inconvenient working hours?”

Norway has more female chief librarians than Sweden. When asked about this, Ms Landøy answers that part of the reason may be that libraries in Norway are so small. On average, libraries in Denmark and Sweden are larger. And this may also make them more attractive workplaces for men?

#### Professional competence

One of the questions in the survey was related to professional competence in librarianship. In answer to the question about how important professional competence in librarianship was for a chief librarian, many answered that they did not think it was essential. The responses also showed that chief librarians throughout the country have very different backgrounds.

Some have a background in the education sector and others in the culture sector.

“One of the chief librarians I talked to had a background from the business sector and had worked in finance and marketing. The chief librarian said that these skills were important and provided security and authority in managing the financial side of things. Several chief librarians mentioned that managing the finances was a particular challenge. Perhaps librarianship studies should offer a management development programme including subjects such as finance, statistics, lobbying, marketing and human resources?” Ane Landøy remarks.

Her doctoral thesis will be available in February 2014. She tells us that she is considering linking it to the biblioteknorge@nb.no (an email list for the entire library sector in Norway). “I would like to give something back to all those who took the trouble and the time to answer the questionnaire. I hope that the study will prove useful,” she concludes.

Interview by Elin Tinholt  
National Library of Norway  
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# Training leaders in small libraries



Päivi Jokitalo

Peer support and networking. Those were by far the most important benefits of a year-long training aimed at library directors, according to the participants.

In February 2013, 21 library directors from small and middle-sized municipalities gathered for their first two-day meeting with staff from Turku University of Applied Sciences who had put together the training programme running a whole year. While some of the group members knew each other from conferences or work circles, others had never met face-to-face before.

Any initial doubts or hesitation seemed to vanish during the first sessions, and by the second meeting conversation was flowing freely. As the coordinator of the course, I've had the privilege of seeing the development of the group dynamics – which has put a smile on my face more than once.

### Practical and pragmatic leadership

Competence management, leading change, human resources management, information architecture as well as customer relations and project and process management were part of the training. Some of the topics covered during the ten meetings held in different parts of the country – mostly in regional libraries – provoked more discussion than others.

The reality in a town with a population of 5,000 is very different from that of 100,000 inhabitants. The participants were able to relate to the problems and issues facing the other library directors, coming from fairly similar circumstances.

The whole contents were anchored in

practice with teachers from universities of applied sciences and specialists from the library field.

“I was hoping the presenters would question the obvious, and even propose radical opinions to get me out of a rut, and many did,” one participant said.

### Feedback and self-reflection

Apart from meeting every month, the participants made use of Facebook and the e-learning environment provided by Turku University of Applied Sciences.

They were required to take part in online discussions and to complete written assignments, draft out strategies and look at the library processes, always with the option of the other group members giving comments and support. Feedback was also offered by the instructors.

A blog was set up for the course and used as a platform to inform a wider audience of the discussions but also as an open learning environment for self-reflection. Guest bloggers from different libraries provided their insights into library leadership. As one of the participants put it: “In addition to the networking aspect, the overall picture of leadership is clearer now.” Another participant added: “I have so many ideas for development I'm sure my staff are going to think it's too much!”

During the second quartile of the program, each participant chose a topic for their diploma, a pragmatic paper to be completed by the end of the year.

### Networking day and night

In their feedback, every single participant brought up the importance of networking and peer support.

“Even if it can be difficult to arrange, the fact that you're away from your everyday life and the office is a plus,” one participant said.

Another participant said that to be able to concentrate on the subject at hand and talk to your colleagues for two whole days had almost felt like a luxury.

At times the networking went on well into the small hours. “Discussing the theoretical framework of our diplomas” was one of the late-night tweets I, the coordinator, received one Thursday.

While all the workshops and lectures were appreciated, it is clear that any organizer is well advised to do their best to create an atmosphere of trust and collaboration for such a long and demanding programme to succeed.

In this case, the group made it easy for themselves by bonding, sparring and encouraging one another. With that in place, the job of the instructors and facilitators is fairly simple.

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## FACTS ON TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR LIBRARY DIRECTORS

- A training programme tailor-made for library directors in small and middle-sized municipalities.
- 21 participants selected by senior library advisors in regional government – municipalities with 1,700 to 30,000 inhabitants; number of staff ranging from 1 to 25, opening hours from 1,380 to 7,260.
- Financed by Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment.
- Designed and organized by Turku University of Applied Sciences; 20 credit points.
- Running from February until December 2013 with ten two-day sessions.
- A similar programme for 30 Swedish-speaking library directors runs from October 2013 until the end of 2014. Financed by Regional State Administrative Agencies and offered by the Centre for Continuing Education at Åbo Akademi University, it combines face-to-face meetings with online learning, like its Finnish-language counterpart.

# Management by reading

There are a vast number of theories on leadership out there: *The One Minute Manager*, *The Effective Executive*, and *Management by Walking around*, to name but a few. But so far we have found nothing on *Management by Reading*.



Ingebrigt Steen Jensen  
and Trude Solheim

Reading management literature is rarely rewarding. For managers to read real literature, however, is a brilliant idea. Especially if you look for leaders who get everything wrong, so at least you know which mistakes to avoid.

Take Captain Ahab, for instance. The feared, monomaniac leader of men on board the whaling ship *Pequod*, hunting for *Moby Dick*. No care for his people, no involvement, no empowerment, nothing of what we are told to look for today. Ahab is a leader driven solely by his instincts and lust for revenge, totally disregarding the dangers to which he exposes his ship, his crew and himself.

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is equally illustrative and depressing. The dystopian novel centers around the foundations of civilization and how fragile our compassion for others really is. The 'good guy', Ralph, has big trouble maintaining a sort of democratic leadership, and is challenged by the brute Jack who forms his own tribe of stranded schoolboys and leads them by brutality.

Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Ibsen's *Brand* are all champions of terrible leadership and misjudgements.

## Read to understand

Where do we find the good leaders in

fiction? The ones who command our respect? To us, they are nowhere to be found. For some reason, libraries are full of horrible leaders. At least as long as you look for them in the fiction department.

So what is good management literature? Maybe Ingebrigt's father, the late publisher Brikt Jensen of Gyldendal Norsk Forlag in Norway, was right when he stated that managers should read all the time in order to understand the heart and soul of man, to reflect upon ethical dilemmas and the importance of choice – but never in search of leadership idols or recipes. His advice was simple. Avoid management literature at all costs. Read literature instead.

We found one poem portraying the qualities of good leadership, typically written by a stout defender of imperialism, namely Rudyard Kipling's *If*. It may be pompous, but it moves your emotions.

## Librarian

But Kipling apart, you have to search outside the fiction and poetry shelves for stories and advice on how to be a leader. You find them in the Management Literature Department, bearing titles like *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*. And you find them under Biographies, whether they be about Nelson Mandela, Steve Jobs, Alex Ferguson or Anita Roddick.

So librarians should be the best leaders in the world, having read all the novels of how not to do it, the management recipes of how to do it and the biographies of how people did it. Regrettably, avid readers rarely choose to go into management. They prefer the solitude of a good chair, a good book and a bright lamp. They have the deepest understanding of man's strengths and weaknesses, what drives us forward and what breaks us down, but they don't use it for practical purposes.

Groups of people who succeed, who reach their goals and have fun on the way, are always blessed with good leaders. That's why so many of us don't succeed and never have fun. So librarians – shoulder your responsibilities! Use all your knowledge, your extensive reading and your insight into people's minds, to lead people. You don't have to go to business schools to do it, you see. It's probably an advantage not to.

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**IF**

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

*Rudyard Kipling, Public Domain*

Photo: Annika Hjerpe



Sofie Samuelsson, responsible for gender issues and project leader of Hallonbergen library's LGBT certification, by the rainbow shelf.

# Equality without gender perspective

Almost exactly one year ago, the public library in Hallonbergen near Stockholm became the first library in Sweden to achieve LGBT-certified status. Such a certificate indicates an organization's efforts in actively creating an open and including atmosphere, welcome to everyone. Much of the criteria focuses on educating staff and developing methods for challenging long-established norms in society.



Anika Hjerpe

The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL) educates and executes certification. The certification process takes six to eight months and to become certified, all staff must obtain a certain level of knowledge about LGBT issues.

The certificate guarantees a workplace with a sound working environment and ambition to treat everyone with respect from an LGBT perspective, and it additionally provides a spotlight for the organizations' ambition to strategically work with these issues.

"We award them our stamp of recognition confirming that solid progress has been made with the issues at hand," says Veronica Berg Hulthén, responsible for education and school information at RFSL Stockholm.

"We have been doing this since 2008, we started it as a test to see if it was a concept that could work. The first place to be certified was a community health care center. We then worked with a youth health care center and a men's health care center.

We felt that the certification process worked well, and made it a permanent

part of our operations," says Veronica Berg Hulthén.

## More libraries

She says that the development since then has exploded. To date, almost 150 facilities, mostly within the health care field, have been LGBT certified, but there are more libraries in the pipeline. Three more libraries have already started the certification process; one will begin in February 2014 and another one with a kick-off meeting on the near horizon.

"The majority of certified facilities are within health care, but we think we can certify within a lot of different areas. It is a lot of fun to work with libraries, they are visited by many people so it feels good," says Veronica Berg Hulthén.

Every business or facility to be LGBT certified experiences a lot of changes. The manner of working and interacting with visitors is thoroughly examined, and the working environment for the staff is also subject to in-depth scrutiny.

"In Hallonbergen the process went very well, they made some major changes, the type of changes we see in all places that go

through the certification process. Often changes of linguistic usage and address which are the most obvious," says Veronica Berg Hulthén.

The public library in Hallonbergen, in suburban Stockholm, was the first library in Sweden to receive the certification.

## Eight months

In the municipality of Sundbyberg, where Hallonbergen is situated, the management wanted to work with equality. They took a course in equality integration and looked at how they work with equality throughout the municipality.

"It interested me, when I studied to become a librarian I felt that there was very little focus on gender issues," says Sofie Samuelsson, responsible for gender issues and project leader of Hallonbergen library's LGBT certification.

"We talked about how we could work with equality in a library. Inequality is often seen as inequality between men and women, but that can often reestablish power structures between the sexes. We thought about how we could work with equality without defining gender, and



“Sofie Samuelsson: Norms criticism is very important in this certification. It is the library that is certified, but it became a very personal journey for many of us. We received a lot of new knowledge that made us reflect on our own norms. It was a big thing.”

heard about some pre-schools that were going to get LGBT certified, so that’s how we came up with the idea to LGBT certify the library,” Sofie Samuelsson says.

The certification process took eight months, and is a skill-acquisition process in which LGBT issues are made visible and social norms in general are scrutinized.

#### The way you say things

To become certified, it was also necessary to meticulously go through the operations of the facility, including everything from overseeing policies, operational guidelines and the physical environment in the library, to how information is presented on the library web page and on informational posters. To facilitate this work, RFSL had a ready-made startup package with check-lists to follow.

“For example, we have changed the text on our posters from ‘come with your mom and dad’ to ‘adults’ since there are children here that have no mom or dad. And we have changed the name of our ‘parent shelf’ to ‘family shelf’”

This is not something that RFSL has instructed the library to do. Sofie Samuelsson explains, that when you start thinking about social norms and work with the way you use your language, you become observant of how habitually norms are dictating the things you say and think.

“When you start to think about it, you change what you say.”

#### A mindset change

At the end of the certification process, all of the library staff had to take a test, which did not only include testing factual knowledge, but also mindset. Everyone passed, all the check-lists were completed, and they had decided how they would continue to work with LGBT issues when the certification process was over.

“I hope this has made us more including. This is quite a sexually segregated community and we try not to assign gender to people when we talk to them. For me, this is about knowledge and we must continuously work with these issues.”

The library in Hallonbergen is not the largest in the area, but it is well-attended and much appreciated in the community.

“We have up to about 700 visitors per day. Some people come here for our ‘rainbow shelf’ and it does inspire questions and discussions here in the library. The certification has given us tools and methods to meet questions and prejudices that people might have,” Sofie Samuelsson says.

Text and photo:  
Annika Hjerpe

Press and Communication Officer  
National Library of Sweden

## DENMARK



Photo: Henrik Schou

### VIRTUAL VISIT TO HJØRRING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Now you can explore your local library on the internet even when you're not able to visit in person. Hjørring is the first public library in Denmark to be photographed by a certified Google photographer. The result is a walking tour around the five-year-old premises of the library in central Hjørring. So far, the library has used the tour as a PR tool but anybody interested in Scandinavian interior design in a library setting is welcome to have a look at: <http://goo.gl/y8VM7>

*Danmarks Biblioteker 3/2013*  
[www.db.dk/files/dbf.dk/DB0313.pdf](http://www.db.dk/files/dbf.dk/DB0313.pdf)

### READING ALL OVER DENMARK

Even if library news from Denmark tend to revolve around emerging technologies and user-driven development, reading has by no means been forgotten. Marianne Jelved, the minister of culture, has allocated DKK 20 million over the next four years to *Reading Denmark*, a new programme which includes, among other things, a competition between municipalities on the most creative and exciting initiative to get more people reading.

A handful of regions have been selected as 'reading municipalities' which receive a grant of up to DKK 500,000 for measures promoting reading among Danes who rarely or never read literature. The municipalities define the target groups themselves.

An advisory group will inform of the experiences of the 12 model municipalities who've already come up with ideas such as book circles in manufacturing companies and poems read over super-market loudspeakers.

[www.danmarklaeser.dk](http://www.danmarklaeser.dk)

### KNOW YOUR LIBRARIAN

When library staff no longer hide behind their reference desks they need to be recognised by some other sign. Uniforms have also been debated in Finland, at times heatedly, but few libraries have opted for specific pieces of clothing for the whole staff. The most common item is probably a name tag on a lanyard.

In Aalborg, an orange lanyard was tested. While it did make recognizing staff easier, the library chose a more visible symbol: a green button-down shirt.

The colour is said to symbolise helpfulness, tolerance and politeness, values which are important at the library. The shirts can be worn casually over a t-shirt or buttoned-down. The colour goes with the library interior and furnishings.

After initial doubts, the staff agree that especially roving reference librarians need something to tell the users who the library professionals are.

*Danmarks Biblioteker 4/2013*  
[www.db.dk/files/dbf.dk/DB0413.pdf](http://www.db.dk/files/dbf.dk/DB0413.pdf)

### LISTENING CIRCLES

The Danish Broadcasting Company runs 32 listening circles in public libraries around the country. These music clubs focus on classical music but from autumn 2013, the new Beat Clubs kick off at around 19 libraries. The listening circles are a cooperation dating back to 2010 between the Broadcasting Company, public libraries and Bibzoom, the online music service of Danish libraries.

The clubs are another win-win example of collaboration. They meet in libraries every month to discuss the participants' musical experiences. The local librarian receives a facilitator's pack and Bibzoom offers downloads on the current theme. Denmark's Radio also focuses on the composers and music genres in question. The library comes into contact with users, likeminded library customers get a chance to meet each other and the Broadcasting Company reaches into every corner of the country.

[www.bf.dk/Fagmagasinet](http://www.bf.dk/Fagmagasinet)  
*Perspektiv/Bladet/2013/~-/media/*

## FINLAND

### LIBRARIES SPREADING TO OTHER MEDIA

Text TV is still alive as not all who watch television make use of the internet. This is why the Finnish *Ask A Librarian* service not only operates on the web and on national and local radio but publishes 'picks of the week' on text TV. The questions and answers are selected every Tuesday from the online service and include ponderings such as whether a divorced woman should be referred to as Miss or Mrs.

*Libraries.fi*  
[www.kirjastot.fi/fi-FI/ajankohtaista/tiedote/ajankohtaista/kysy-kirjastonhoitajalta-kuuluu-ja-nakyy-ylella](http://www.kirjastot.fi/fi-FI/ajankohtaista/tiedote/ajankohtaista/kysy-kirjastonhoitajalta-kuuluu-ja-nakyy-ylella)

### OPEN LEADERSHIP AT NATIONAL LIBRARY

It has been a tradition in e.g. licensing

seminars to quiz representatives of e-resource vendors and publishers before a live audience. Difficult questions arising from negotiations have been addressed there and then.

The same principle was put to use at the annual library network conference in Finland, organized by the National Library. This time, the questions were collected beforehand and pointed at the executive team of the Library Network Services unit.

The session lasted a whole hour and included topics such as when will the unit relocate to the center of Helsinki and how the National library is listening to the needs of the libraries further away from the metropolitan region.

*The National Library Network Services wiki*  
[www.kiwi.fi/display/KIR/Ohjelma](http://www.kiwi.fi/display/KIR/Ohjelma)

## NORWAY

### FRIDGE POETRY

Askim public library in Norway is using the fridge poetry magnets in a creative way in their poetry competition.

Users are invited to write a poem by rearranging the small fridge magnets in the library (yes, there is an actual fridge involved). They are then instructed to take a photo of their poem, post it on Instagram, tag it with the agreed hashtag and leave their name and phone number. All users who have posted their poem take part in a prize draw.

The competition is part of the Norwegian year of languages. Simple and fun!

*Askim bibliotek*  
<http://askimbibliotek.wordpress.com/>

### KICK-OFF FOR READING

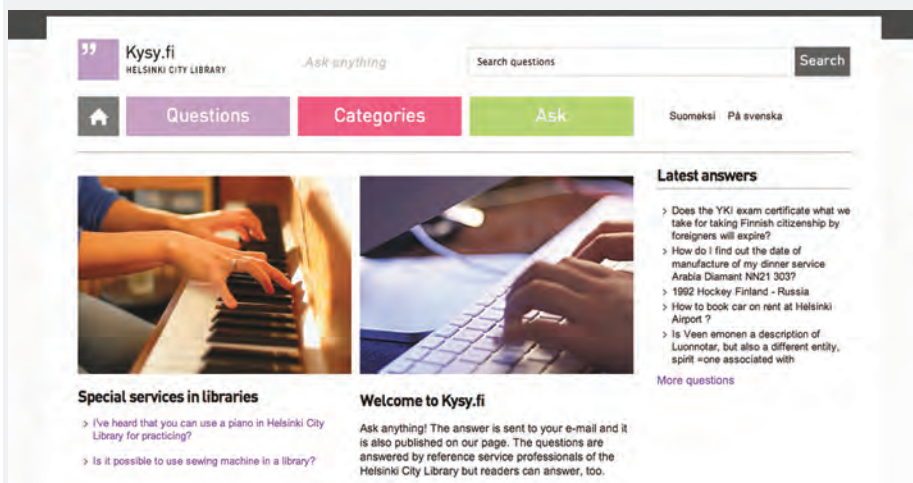
It has been done before, but as it seems to work so well, it is well worth reporting: the Holmlia soccer club, Deichmanske Library in Holmlia and the !les (!read) association cooperate on Hat trick, a reading project where fiction and football meet.

The soccer teams were introduced to a selection of books, soccer professionals gave talks on their careers and the meaning reading can have for players.

The library is also trying to reach users in new surroundings such as the soccer field which the young players associate with leisure and pleasure. When children hear the coaches and older players talk about how books can open new worlds, how reading can help you unwind and how you can identify yourself with the characters in a book, it makes reading more meaningful.

"My favourite book is Me, Zlatan which I've read three times. Now I'm going to read Golden boys by Arild Stavrum", said one of the children in a group after the Hat trick meeting where Stavrum, a former soccer player, gave a book talk.

*Bok og bibliotek 3/2013*  
[www.bokogbibliotek.no/images/stories/pdf\\_2013/Bob-3-2013\\_web.pdf](http://www.bokogbibliotek.no/images/stories/pdf_2013/Bob-3-2013_web.pdf)



### ASK ANYTHING

The local *Ask a Librarian* service at Helsinki City Library has undergone a revamp. One of the new features is engagement from the library users. In addition to responses from library staff, questions from library users can be answered by fellow patrons, all you have to do is register as a user. The software allows for several answers to one question. Library staff are able to post questions awaiting answers on the front page. The shift in openness acknowledges the shared skills and know-how residing in the user community: library professionals may not always be the best – or at least, not the only - authorities and experts on a topic. The change is in line with the general trend of engaging and involving users.

*The Ask Anything service*  
[www.kysy.fi](http://www.kysy.fi)



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## SWEDEN



Photo: Albin Olsson

### LIBRARY OF THE YEAR

The City Library of Gothenburg has shown how libraries can also excel in tough conditions. While the main library has been under renovation and expansion since spring 2012, a new 300 m<sup>2</sup> branch was opened in the center where users are able to access the internet on the public access computers or their own devices, read papers and magazines and borrow from the smaller collection available. The library has also collaborated with new partners and professions to make library services visible in new surroundings. They have a special branch for children up to five years old in a museum with programme for pre-school children, space for activities and of course, books, films and computer games to take home. The Dynamo branch, also located in a museum, is geared at 15-25 year-olds with facilities for arrangements the target group has initiated: art exhibits by the young library users, debates, poetry recitals etc. These are some the reasons why the Gothenburg Public Library was rewarded with the annual Library of the Year award. The award has been given out by the national trade union, DIK every year since 1986.

*Biblioteksbladet 8/2013*

<http://biblioteksbladet.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Biblioteksbladet-1.pdf>

### STEP ON IT!

Most libraries today are faced with the dilemma of making e-resources visible for the users within the confines of the physical library. When the Umeå University Library Arts Campus was thinking of new ways to market their resources they turned to the students at the campus and the HUMlab, which brings together students, researchers, artists and entrepreneurs to experiment with the latest technologies. From a survey made by

students, among students it became clear that the users hadn't found any of the e-journals they read through the library. One of the initiatives from the students was an interactive floor which would function as a big, and impossible to miss, user interface to the library materials.

The HUMlab is going to build the biggest interactive floor space in Europe – 5 times 4 meters – with high resolution. As the work is done as part of the activities of the lab, the library does

not have to pay a cent for the project. Even before the floor is in place there are plans to study how the visual user interface would function with other user groups such as school children.

*Biblioteksbladet 6-7/2013*

[http://biblioteksbladet.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BBL6-7-2013\\_low.pdf](http://biblioteksbladet.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BBL6-7-2013_low.pdf)

### ACCESS TO LITERATURE

The Best Easy-to-Read Library where people with reading difficulties are taken into account is chosen every year and the latest libraries to win the recognition were the City Library of Värnamo and the school library at Polhemsskolan in Gävle who shared the prize given out for the fifth time.

In Värnamo the public library offers a broad spectrum of activities supporting reading and easy-to-read materials for users in old people's homes, special and comprehensive schools and adult education. They also have programs for users with dementia, for immigrants and for people in care settings. The library sees serving the weakest reader groups as a matter of democracy: they too should have access to literature and news, like the rest of the users.

*Biblioteksbladet 8/2013*

<http://biblioteksbladet.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Biblioteksbladet-1.pdf>

## KEEP UP WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORDIC LIBRARIES IN SCANDINAVIAN LIBRARY QUARTERLY. WWW.SLQ.NU

Scandinavian Library Quarterly  
Volume 46, no. 4, 2013  
SLQ  
National Library of Sweden  
PO Box 24124  
SE-104 51 Stockholm  
Sweden

Scandinavian Library Quarterly  
(SLQ) is published by the  
Nordic Library Authorities

Legally responsible publisher:  
Gunilla Herdenberg  
National Librarian of Sweden

Editor-in-chief  
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Lay-out: Staehr Grafisk  
Staehr@staehrgrafisk.dk  
Print: C.S.Grafisk A/S

ISSN 2001-2268  
Electronic ISSN: 1604-4843

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