



Working Paper - European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 – The Swedish Contribution to TICKLE

National context

1.1.1 Ethnic and social segregation

Sweden is a multicultural society with an ethnic, cultural and religious diversity among its population. There are though, as in all of Europe, certain difficulties and complexities related to this condition. One of the biggest problems facing Swedish democracy today concerns the gap between those who are part of our democracy and those who feel excluded or even are excluded. The political exclusion is often based on ethnic origin and class. Even though it has been combated through many different political efforts over a number of years, Swedish society still suffers from social, political and ethnic segregation, mainly in the larger cities. This effects all political areas. The existence of an intercultural dialogue is therefore virtually essential.

The make-up of migration to Sweden and its effect on the society today has some particularities that sets it apart from most European countries; The Nordic Passport Union (since 1954) which enabled mobility both with travel (no passports necessary within the Nordic community) and work (no permits necessary); No major political threats, challenging the idea of a democratic and open society, in modern times; There exists segregation between city and suburb but the suburbs are not divided in ethnic terms as in many other European suburban areas. This means that Swedish cities and suburbs are not divided in areas where different ethnical groups live separately. Most suburbs instead have a mix of ethnic backgrounds, although there are segregation between immigrants and ethnic Swedes and more well-situated areas certainly tend to have an all ethnic Swedish population. Many people with an immigrant origin tend to live in suburban areas in the larger cities. This has contributed to an emerging situation of social and ethnic segregation, where these two forms of segregation tend to coincide.

Still, the fact that Swedish suburbs are somewhat mixed in the sense described may still provide some opportunities in turning a multicultural society into an intercultural society.

In terms of best practices there are a number of local projects working in the field of intercultural dialogue, locally in certain suburbs and, at the same time, on an international level. The Government will during 2008 and thereafter continue to closely follow up on such projects.

1.1.2 National minorities

The Swedish Government has ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. Sweden has five national minorities: Jews, Roma, Sami (who also are an indigenous people), Swedish Finns, and Tornedalers. The historical minority languages are Yiddish, Romany Chib (all varieties) Sami (all varieties), Finnish and Meänkieli. The aim of the Swedish policy on national minorities is to protect the national minorities, strengthen their power influence and support the historical minority languages with a view to keeping them alive.

The five national minorities can naturally have an important role to play in promoting an intercultural dialogue on a European level, not the least since these groups and their languages do not share national borders with the member states.

1.1.3 The Sami – an Indigenous People

The Swedish Parliament recognized the Sami as an indigenous people in 1977. Since time immemorial the Sami have lived in an area that now extends across four countries – Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. The region is called Sápmi (Samiland).

As an indigenous people the status of the Sami differs from that of the other minorities in Sweden. In recognition of the fact that the Sami are a separate people, with their own culture, language and customs, the Sami Parliament was set up in 1993. The Sami Parliament has decision-making powers on a number of different matters, for example culture and language.

As both a national minority and an indigenous people with its own parliament the Sami have a special role in an European intercultural dialogue, in particular since the Sami lives in four European countries and are the only recognized indigenous people in Europe.

1.1.4 The importance of participation from civil society

The Swedish population has on several occasions proved to be considerably hesitant towards the European Union as such. One important challenge to be met in all union-initiated projects, including the process of promoting intercultural dialogue in an European context, is therefore to meet this widespread scepticism among the population. To point out a distinct and explicit purpose in all information strategies is hence considered as crucial.

In the work with promoting intercultural dialogue it is of importance to stress the meaning of good opportunities for citizens and civil society to participate in and influence the political process of the Union, which can result in an increased sense of belonging to the Union.

2. National priorities for the Year

The national priority for the Year 2008 will mainly be to continue and to follow up on the work initiated during the Swedish Year of Multiculture 2006. All events and important discussions that have begun before and during 2006 are meant to be long lasting and of continued importance for all cultural activities. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue therefore will be a natural follow-up.

The Year also gives an opportunity to further develop experiences made during the work with the Council of Europe campaign All Different - All Equal. The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) has received state funding in order to pursue their work with the campaign until 2009. It will therefore be natural to examine any possibilities of co-operation and synergy effects between the All Different – All Equal campaign and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The work progress in the field of culture will, regardless of the Year, be effected by the Government's continued ambitions in creating more international and intercultural exchange, to stop all kinds of discrimination and breaking the isolation existing in certain suburbs.

In a European perspective, from Sweden's point of view, it will be most necessary to open possibilities for co-operations and more dialogue with all present and future member states. In line with the purpose and aims with the Year, the possibility to co-operate with other neighbouring countries, i.e. Balkan, North African and Middle East countries.

3. Education

It is of perpetual importance for all cultural agencies, organizations and activities with Governmental grants to have a strong focus on the public and be part of the society at large. The emphasis given to education in the Decision will therefore partly be answered by normal assignments. Some of the agencies, like the Living History Forum and the Museums of World Culture, have explicit tasks for co-operation with schools. From the year 2007 special attention is being given to children's and youth culture and all agencies are to meet that political aim in their respective field of work.

4. Best practices

When it comes to best practices and inspiration for projects on intercultural dialogue the Swedish actions during the year will pinpoint several of the authorities both institutional and from the civil society. This will happen both through the Swedish national project and through a series of collaborations during the year.

6. Communication strategy

A national communication strategy for 2008 will be based on experiences made from the Year of Multiculture 2006, and from the Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

It can be stated that intercultural dialogue and intercultural competence will be more and more a prerequisite for working in an international scale in present and future society. The Swedish communication strategy will be rooted in the Swedish national project and synergies created throughout the year.

7. Sustainability

The expected sustainable effects of the Year at national level are quite high since vast efforts are already being made through the Year of Multiculture 2006. All activities during this year were meant to be highly sustainable. The experiences made during 2006 are of great importance for the work on 2008, but still, the overall judgement is that the full long-term effects of Sweden's high ambitions in this field will not be shown until yet another couple of years.

We would also like to point out the fact that Sweden has ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and undertaken to perform and carry out all stipulations therein contained. This will be of importance for upcoming work in the field of intercultural dialogue and for submitting sustainable results.

8. Monitoring and reporting

A strategy for monitoring and reporting the Year will include special efforts that surround the Swedish national project, mainly on issues of empowerment and audience development. We will also work on a national level with series of seminars and workshop. All of these efforts will be monitored and reported by both the ministry of culture and others.

9. Home not Home, The Swedish national project

Home not Home is a project highlighting new perspectives on Sweden/Europe today. It is an intensive collaboration between larger institutions and smaller organisations with different know-how and practice. The aim is to explore themes of migration through a gender perspective, develop new audiences and encourage intercultural dialogue – from the very local to a European level. Home not Home provides a possibility to try out a model where focus is on networking, intercultural dialogue and international cultural exchange.

Sweden has become, as the rest of Europe, a country of diversity. Parallel to national diversity, Europe is facing increased diversity within the Union with new countries like Turkey aiming to enter, a country whose population already lives across European borders. Home not Home focuses on their “new homes”, stories and future.

Home Not Home is an intercultural project that aims to provide new cultural experiences and perspectives to increase the intercultural understanding and to explore themes that mirror and recognize new conceptions of “home” in Europe today. Target groups are 2.nd generation immigrants, bi-cultural individuals (Turkish-speaking/others) and others. We estimate to reach an audience of 15-20000. Special audience development will be executed by our partner MOI, together by a nationwide presenters’ network of Riksställningar and Riksteaterns (including 5 Turkish/Swedish presenters in major cities). Home not Home will be presented in full size in 4 major Swedish cities, and in parts to about 20 cities. It will also be presented in 3 Turkish cities; Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir.

Home not Home consists of following activities:

Room 1: theatrical adaptation of the German/Turkish film “Gegen die Wand”, directed by Dritëro Kasapi (Turkish/Albanian/Swede) - **Riksteatern**

Room 2: exhibition/installation by the Turkish artist Selda Asal - **Riksställningar**

The two rooms are the two outer limits to the project, between which a field of energy is created;

Room 3: a number of encounters; seminars and exchange of experts (**Re:Orient**), training sessions, guided tours and partnershiping (**Intercult**) and audience development (**Mol**).

In order to connect the project and the theme in the “mother country” we will collaborate with several organisations in Turkey; Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts, Anadolu Kültür and Garajistanbul.

In connection to the build-up of Home not Home, seminars and presentations will take place in 4 different cities around Sweden.

A collaboration with WALTIC (Writers and Translators International Congress) in Stockholm on the theme of intercultural dialogue. At the moment we are also discussing the possibilities of collaborations with Stockholm Culture Festival and several others. These plans will be finalized in the beginning of the year.

Finally Sweden will hold a conference over two days in the first week of November at Södra Teatern (The South Theatre) in Stockholm. This conference will combine the Swedish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers with local, national, Nordic and European initiatives.