

## Stories for change

In 2016, Läsrörelsen (the Reading Movement) is embarking on a collaborative project with author David Lagercrantz, who is donating a substantial contribution to encourage reading in 200 secondary schools from North to South. The project *Stories for change* aims to highlight narratives in fiction, biographies, memoirs and series. At least 35,000 students across the country are set to take part. The project has also been made possible through the support of the Culture Foundation of the Postcode Lottery.

**David Lagercrantz** became one of the country's foremost promoters of reading with the publication of the book *I am Zlatan Ibrahimović*, which he described as the best thing to have happened in his career. He has since been deeply engaged in the question of how to get a new generation and new audiences to learn and share stories capable of grabbing attention and bringing about change. David Lagercrantz is actively involved in the project.

We believe that a strong story can make all the difference in a tumultuous period when our very humanity is tested. Thus the overriding goal is for stories to deepen students' knowledge of themselves and others, and to contribute to a more humane society.

*– We grow through reading! Books sharpen our sight and our empathy. I think that few things can bridge the gap in society between 'us and them' as good literature, says author David Lagercrantz.*

A conference for all school leaders and affected local politicians is to be held in the autumn and 20 inspirational and educational conferences for hundreds of teachers and school librarians are being organised for the spring and autumn of 2017. Eight titles are being selected for students to work with. Authors are to participate through newly-made films. The invitation is open to all Swedish schools. A distribution key ensures that the project is spread across the country.

The project's main educationalist is **Ann Boglind**, university lecturer/teacher trainer in Swedish didactics at the Department of literature, history of ideas and religion at Gothenburg University. In essence, she is a teacher of Swedish and was chair of the Swedish Teachers' Association for many years.

Another key figure is **Johan Unenge**, author, cartoonist and Sweden's first reading ambassador and reading coach.

*– As far as we know, no similar project has ever been undertaken in Sweden with secondary school students. Läsrörelsen has built up a broad bank of experience that we are going to put to good use, says Läsrörelsen chair and project leader Elisabet Reslegård.*

**For more information**, contact: Lina Kåberg Stene, cell +46 70 762 04 66, [lina.kaberg.stene@gmail.com](mailto:lina.kaberg.stene@gmail.com)

**The non-profit association Läsrörelsen's** first nationwide campaign was launched in 2000 at the Book Fair in Gothenburg, using the slogan "Give your children a language." The background for the campaign was partly the sharp decline in parents reading to their young children, as reported in the so-called Children's Barometer of 1999, and partly the OECD survey showed that 25 percent of all adult Swedes had deficient literacy skills. A follow-up study showed that 20 percent of young adults (18-25 years old) did not achieve the required level of reading and writing skills by the end of their compulsory schooling. Over the years, Läsrörelsen has made use of many different methods and models concerned with narrating, reading, writing and learning. One unique project is Book Happy Meal in collaboration with McDonald's. Since 2001, 95 titles by 87 different authors and illustrators

*have been included in the project, amounting to an overall circulation of 16.9 million children's books and picture books. Another project, aimed at highlighting the week 44 school break as a pleasurable reading week for all pupils between 7 and 19, was introduced last year. A growing network has also been formed and the 80 plus parties that have joined so far include student organisations, publishers, sports associations, trade unions, cultural institutions and businesses.*