

Läsrörelsen (the Reading Movement), background story

The first national campaign of the non-profit association, Läsrörelsen, started in 2000 with the motto "Give your children a language", which is now the motto of the association. The initiative was partly due to a marked decrease in the number of parents who read to their young children, a development that had been going on for years and been reported in the so called Barnbarometern (Children's Barometre) in 1999. Another reason was a study made by the OECD, which showed that 25 percent of the adult population in Sweden lacked in terms of reading and writing skills. A follow-up study showed that 20 percent of young adults (18–25 years old) did not manage to reach a level of reading and writing required to graduate from compulsory school. Läsrörelsen is also a continuation of the national Dyslexikampanjen (Dyslexia Campaign) carried out during the end of the 1990s, where Elisabet Reslegård acted as campaign leader and Bengt Westerberg (former Liberal Party leader and Deputy Prime Minister) as chairman. They maintained the same roles during the first years of Läsrörelsen.

Another national campaign, Lär för livet (Learn for Life)/Läsrörelsen, began in September 2002, with curiosity as the keyword. Just like the previous campaign, it was a main theme at the Göteborg Book Fair.

Läsrörelsen, projects

LÄSLOVET (the Reading Holiday) week 44 – a wide collaboration to promote reading

Every year, one million Swedish pupils have one week of holidays in the winter and one in the autumn.

When the first holiday week was introduced in the winter of 1940 during World War II, it was called the Coke Holiday and was put in place to save heating costs in the schools (coke was used for heating at the time). Different activities were organised with focus on the outdoors and above all, winter sports. The health aspect was important. In the late 1950s, it turned into the Winter Sports Holiday and spread across the country.

The second school holiday week was aimed mainly at children in the countryside and was called the Potato Holiday and allowed pupils to stay at home and help out on the farms. As the importance of farming diminished during the 20th century, the holiday eventually disappeared. It was gradually replaced by the Autumn Holiday when the regulations regarding the school year changed. Since 2000, the holiday takes place in week 44, at the end of October/, start of November.

In modern-day Sweden, where language and reading are gaining more and more importance, it is time for the Autumn Holiday to turn into LÄSLOVET (the Reading Holiday), with focus on the encouraging reading, storytelling and writing.

LÄSLOVET was initiated by the Swedish publishing house, Bonnierförlagen, and Akademibokhandeln through a wide promotion for reading, and it has spread. The network LÄSLOV was founded in the spring of 2015, but already has over 60 participants. A steering group has been appointed and different workgroups have been put together.

Elisabet Reslegård functions as chairman/project leader. As a campaign leader, she has a lot of experience from national educational campaigns such as Dyslexikampanjen, (the Dyslexia Campaign) Psyke kampanjen (the Psyche Campaign) and Läsrörelsen. LÄSLOVET is administrated by Läsrörelsen as an organisation that promotes reading.

Bok Happy Meal (Book Happy Meal) in collaboration with McDonald's. As of 2014, the project included 15 million picture and children's books with 86 titles by 78 different authors and illustrators. A collaboration that began in 1998 and resulted in a first Book Happy Meal campaign in 2001.

In the autumn of 1998, Läsrörelsen (The Reading Movement), Swedish McDonald's and Arctic Paper Munkedals began to discuss how they could join together to promote children's reading. Two years later, this resulted in 1.2 million picture and children's books being included in the Happy Meals in every McDonald's restaurants during four weeks in January and February 2001. One of the books was Lennart Hellsings and Poul Ströyer's **ABC**. This effort to boost children's reading was one out of many reading promotion activities that were part of Läsrörelsen at the start of 2000/2001.

This was followed by another two campaign periods during 2002 and 2003 where one million CD ROM games were handed out for each campaign, with focus on learning and games for children.

Since 2004, picture and children's books have been part of the Happy Meal during one month every autumn. For the sixth year in a row, a unique Nordic Book Happy Meal will be launched where 1.8 million books – thanks to all the involved authors, illustrators, translators and publishing houses – will reach children across all of the Nordic countries during four weeks in 2015. The books have been written and illustrated by authors and illustrators from Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway and have been translated to the language of each respective country. In total, there are eight books in 32 different versions. This year, Sweden will also have a picture book during one extra week.

Here are a few examples of previous titles:

Julia vill ha ett djur [Julia wants a pet] by Barbro Lindgren and Eva Eriksson

Jaguaren [The jaguar] by Ulf Stark and Anna Höglund

En Blommas Liv [The life of a flower] by Stefan Casta and Sara Lundberg

Här dansar Herr Gurka [Here dances Mr Cucumber] by Lennart Hellsing and Poul Ströyer

Ta fast Fabian [Catch Fabian] by Jan Lööf

Biblioteksmysteriet [The library mystery] by Martin Widmark and Helena Willis

I Skymningslandet [In the Twilight Land] by Astrid Lindgren and Marit Törnqvist

Tummen tittar på natten [The Thumb looks at the night] by Inger and Lasse Sandberg

Mamma Mu åker rutschkana [Mamma Moo goes down a slide] – bilingual: Swedish/Farsi – by Jujja and Thomas Wieslander and Sven Nordqvist*

The titles over the years have always been selected by children's book expert, Marianne von Baumgarten-Lindberg, who is on the board of Läsrörelsen. Project leader from Läsrörelsen is the former campaign leader and now chairman of the association, Elisabet Reslegård. Project leader from Swedish McDonald's is marketing manager, Ulrika Kindvall Wåreus.

In 2003, Läsrörelsen and McDonald's won the Culture & Industry Award, "Best collaboration Culture & Industry 2003".

*There have been three bilingual books.

BERÄTTA, LEKA, LÄSA (NARRATION, PLAY, READING) is a close collaboration between preschools and libraries on close reading of picture books for children aged 1-3 years. The project was launched in the autumn of 2013 and will end in the spring of 2015, involving 29 communities in the counties of Västmanland, Sörmland and Örebro. Participating experts are Susanna Ekström, literature teacher, former lecturer at Stockholm University, and Marianne von Baumgarten-Lindberg, editor and expert in children's books. 30 inspirational and educational conferences will be held. An educational publication will be handed out to participating preschool teachers and the parents. Picture books with a rich language and expressional images which can be

used for educational purposes have been selected*. All of the 11,000 children who are taking part in the project will receive the book that their school is working with. The books and the educational publication are handed over to the parents in each participating preschool. One objective is to inform the parents about the importance to stimulate reading from an early age.

Each participating school has a contact person. The role of the contact person is to keep in contact with the parents, the library and Läsrörelsen. She/he will actively participate in the project and document the children's development during the on-going process. The contact person will take part in both of the half-day conferences and then report back to the rest of their colleagues. The conferences have a mix of theoretical and hands-on elements. The second conference provides a more in-depth approach than the first one.

Working with close reading (using the same book over a very long period of time) among young children on such a big scale has never been done before. The same goes for the children's teachers, who normally only have a childminder education and rarely get to take part in further training such as this.

During 2013–2015, a total of 30 half-day conferences will be organised for preschool teachers and librarians who participated in the project. In addition, there will be information meetings in Arboga at the start of each term for preschool and library managers who are part of the project, and a initial conference was held in August 2013 for politicians and civil servants.

The main library in each communities will invite children, parents and preschool teachers to cultural activities such as music events, theatre, storytelling and other activities relating to narration, play and reading.

Läsrörelsen work together with the county councils of Västmanland, Sörmland and Örebro and their county libraries. Two county librarians and a person with the equivalent skills from the third county are part of the steering group, along with people with a managerial position in a preschool. The workgroup and reference group consist of people with a broad knowledge of children's library activities and working in preschools. The chairman of Läsrörelsen, Elisabet Reslegård, is the project leader.

Running evaluations of the project are carried out by Senior Lecturer, Barbro Johansson, at the Centre for Consumer Science at the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg, and Ph.D., Sandra Hillén, who works at the same institution. They will conduct ethnographic, qualitative follow-up research of the project.

BERÄTTA, LEKA, LÄSA began as a pilot project in Strängnäs community in 2009 with support from the Minister for Culture at the time. During 2011–2012, a plan was made to continue the project together with preschools and libraries in the counties of Västmanland, Sörmland and Örebro. This led to an application to the Swedish Inheritance Fund regarding a three year project in all of the municipalities of the counties, which was granted in the spring of 2013.

There are plans to expand the project to other counties and regions.

***Här dansar Herr Gurka (Here dances Mr Cucumber)** by Lennart Hellsing and Poul Ströyer, **Kanel och Kanin. Dikter om kroppen (Cinnamon and Rabbit. Poems about the Body)** by Ulf Stark and Charlotte Ramel and **Gummi-Lisa hittar hem (Rubber-Lisa Finds Her Way Home)** by Anna Bengtsson.

Plats för barn! (Room for Children) was the return of Läsrörelsen at the Göteborg Book Fair in 2013 and took place in collaboration with the Book Fair and a great number of partners. Nine seminars with authors, experts, researchers, teachers and others with knowledge and experience of reading, play and learning, and with experienced journalists as moderators. Among the participants in the seminars were the inventor, Håkan Lans, professor Mats Myrberg, artist and children's book author, Sara Lundberg, and politicians from all of the parliamentary parties. The seminar participants were also part of the big exhibition stand, together with many others.

In conjunction with the Göteborg Book fair in 2013, Läsrörelsen launched a campaign with the slogan "Bekämpa språkfattigdomen. Ge plats för barn." (Fight Language Poverty. Make Room for Children.)

The idea conference Plats för barn! (Room for Children) was held in Stockholm in March 2014 in collaboration with the Swedish Teachers' Union, the Göteborg Book Fair, the Swedish publishing houses Bonnierförlagen and Natur & Kultur, the Workers' Educational Association (ABF) Stockholm and Junibacken, with the support of the Cultural Foundation of the Swedish Postcode Lottery. The moderator was journalist, John Chrispinsson.

In the spring of 2012, Läsrörelsen and Junibacken began a collaboration, which included a survey of parents reading to their children, a debate article in the Swedish newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, and a debate held at Junibacken in Stockholm.

The survey conducted by market research company, YouGov, on behalf of Läsrörelsen and Junibacken, included around 1,000 web-based interviews with parents who had children aged 0–9 years. It took place in February and March, 2012. The sample group was representative of the Swedish population aged 25–50 years. The study showed that only 35 percent of the parents read daily to their children, and 30 percent read to their children several times a week but not every day.

En läsande klass (A Reading Class), initiated by Martin Widmark, children's author and school teacher. Through *En läsande klass*, a powerful effort is being made to highlight the big problems that come with a lack in reading comprehension. Tools are being developed which will make it easier for teachers to work with research supported reading strategies in their teaching. The project is being funded through Läsrörelsen's application to the Cultural Foundation of the Swedish Postcode Lottery, which was granted in the spring of 2013 and is carried out in collaboration with Junibacken.

Previous Läsrörelsen projects

Over the years, Läsrörelsen have worked with many methods and models on storytelling, reading, writing and learning. We have always made use of the leading experts and representatives in various fields in order to find an inspiring and knowledgeable way to create the projects that we consider important. Here are a few examples:

Små barns språkvärld (Young Children's Language World) with conferences, lectures, publications and a popular Swedish fictional character among young children, Alfons Åberg, printed on 10 million milk cartons urging young readers to "Write your best word". The winner was 2.5-year-old Victor who contributed with the Swedish novelty, "fickla" (shining with a flashlight under the covers).

Lekens betydelse för lärandet (The Importance of Play in the Learning Process) with 21 play conferences across the country and publications on the importance of play regardless of age.

De nya svenskarna (The New Swedes), a project that focused on that Sweden has gone from a big emigration country to a big immigration country. Conferences and a book were central components. The project developed into a second part, "Hur tillägnar man sig ett nytt språk?" (How Do You Acquire a New Language?), with an audiobook project in SFI classes (Swedish for Immigrants) and an audiobook project based on the children's book **Mio, My Son**, read by the

author, Astrid Lindgren, herself, and with teachers from different subjects, involving 1,300 preschool children in 12 communities in Sweden with the highest number of immigrants.

Writing and storytelling festivals with teacher support, author visits and theatre, involving 32,000 fourth-graders.

Fröken Europa (Miss Europe), a newly written book selected by a jury and distributed to all fifth-graders in Sweden.

Skriv själv (Writing Yourself) together with the newspaper in Skolan/Tidningsutgivarna, aimed to upper school pupils.

Tord – word game online for teenage guys.

På Mars i april (On March in April), science theatre with actors and scientists from the Swedish Natural History Museum, which was showed to seventh-graders in an upper school in each county.

Konstmobilen (The Art Mobile), a tour visiting upper schools in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art and the Swedish Exhibition Agency.

Färska ord – ny svensk litteratur för gymnasister (Fresh Words – New Swedish Literature for Upper Secondary Students) with 100 upper secondary schools across Sweden, gathering for a two-day inspirational conference in order to then implement the project in their own schools.

Utbildning och arbete trots dyslexi (Education and Work Despite Dyslexia), based on in-depth interviews with 40 adults with major reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia. A project in collaboration with the Dyslexia Foundation, which have been invited to various conferences and seminars during the course of the project, resulting in two books.

You can find more information about the projects in the annual reports on the website.

The Board of Läsrörelsen

Elisabet Reslegård, chairman

Susanna Ekström, lecturer, literature teacher

Göran Hägg, senior lecturer in literature, author

Lars-Erik Klason, educational consultant

Marianne von Baumgarten-Lindberg, editor

Gunilla Sandin, library manager

Barbro von Schoenberg, editor

Ulf Stark, author

Siv Hågård, librarian, co-opted member

Bengt Westerberg, honorary chairman

Kerstin Lööv was the Läsrörelsen inspirer, former editor at the newspaper, Skolledaren (The School Leader)

Läsrådet (the Reading Council) was reorganised in 2011 and meet once a year to highlight key issues to Läsrörelsen. The council members:

Peter Alsbjer, library manager, Örebro

Jonas Anderson, consultant, senior adviser Göteborgs stad

Lena Andersson, author

Bengt Berg, author, former member of the Swedish Riksdag (the Left Party)

Stina Berge, artist, crossword creator

Mats Berggren, author, active in Läs för mig pappa (Read to me Daddy)

Olof Buckard, satirist, cultural journalist, preacher

Anna Cokorilo, consultant cultural matters

Lena Kjersén-Edman, librarian, literary scholar

Börje Ehrstrand, former headmaster Rinkebyskolan

Solweig Eklund, consultant, chairman of the Swedish Teachers' Foundation

Rolf Eriksson, communication consultant

Ingemar Fasth, head of literature Kulturhuset City Theatre Stockholm

Pia Forsgren, theater director, artistic director the Jewish Theatre

Johan Furenborn, project leader Andra chansen Uppsala

Ulla Föhrer, reg. speech therapist, MD h. c.

Madeleine Grive, editor in chief of the journal 10Tal

AnnBritt Grünewald, writer

Tuomo Haapala, composer, musician, director

Christer Hermansson, cultural director Strängnäs community

Marianne Högmark, head of cultural policy the Workers' Educational Association (ABF)

Siv Hågård, librarian

Anders Johnsson, writer

Ulrika Kindvall Wåreus, marketing manager, project leader McDonald's Sweden

Ingrid Källström, administrative official/librarian the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM)

David Lagercrantz, author and journalist

Susin Lindblom, president Writers Guild of Sweden

Gunilla Lundgren, author

Torbjörn Lundgren, author

Behrang Miri, artist and journalist

Mats Myrberg, professor em. Special Education at Stockholm University

Björn Ranelid, author

Anneli Reinhammar, former county librarian Sörmland

Inger Sandberg, author

Marianne Steinsaphir, magazine editor Ordfront

Dilsa Deminbag-Sten, author, journalist, director of operations Berättarministeriet

Berit Svedberg, cultural director Stockholms stad

Rosario Ali Taikon, director of operations É Romani Glinda

Lillemor Torstensson, editor, PR officer the Swedish Institute for Children's Books

Svante Törngren, copywriter

Johan Unenge, author, first reading ambassador, now reading coach and spokesperson for the project on sports and reading

René Vázquez Díaz, author

Honorary members of Läsrörelsen

When Läsrörelsen started up at the Göteborg Book Fair in 2000, two honorary members were appointed:

The author, **Astrid Lindgren**

Actor **Lars Göran Carlson** for the world record he set at the Göteborg Book Fair in 2000 when he read aloud from August Strindberg's works for 25 hours.

At the Göteborg Book Fair in 2013, two new honorary members were appointed:

The author, **Lennart Hellsing**

Author and reading ambassador, **Gunilla Lundgren**, for her work "Nobel i Rinkeby" (Nobel in Rinkeby).

Your welcome to join Läsrörelsen. The annual membership fee is 200 kronor, which you pay into the plus giro account of the association: 44 35 12 – 9.

You can find more information at www.lasrorelsen.nu