

# Using workplace learning to support linguistic integration of adult migrants

## Lessons from a decade of work in Sweden

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# Presentation

## **Context: Convergence of two agendas**

- Linguistic integration of adult migrants in Sweden
- Workforce development in Stockholm region

## **How the approach emerged**

- Workforce development context
- Questions, dynamics, answers
- Key elements of the approach for LIAM at work

## **Lessons for LIAM**

- Realising the opportunity work offers

# Stockholm Gerontology Research Center

Foundation established by Stockholm County Council and City of Stockholm 1986

**Mission** Conduct, communicate research relevant to elderly people and their situation in society - Including development of elderly care workforce

**Activity** Research & development, project work

# Migration in Sweden

**Today** Total population  $\approx$  10 million

Migrants (residents born overseas)  $\approx$  1.5 million  $\approx$  15%

65% of migrants from non-EU countries

**Historically** Country of net immigration only since 1940s

**1945-70** importation of labour from other Nordic countries, esp Finland + political refugees from Eastern Europe

**1967** Immigration control due to labour market saturation

**1970s-today** Non-EU migrants = refugees from e.g. former Yugoslavia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America

# LIAM in Sweden (1)

Main vehicle for LIAM = Sfi, created 1965

Svenskundervisning för invandrare / Swedish for immigrants

Aim: ensure basic Swedish

Takes adults (16+) from complete beginner to B1 (pre-int.) level

Programme free to learners registered with local authority

Voluntary, but benefits sometimes linked to participation

Post B1 courses available through adult education

Programmes may include work placements

# LIAM in Sweden (2)

**Policy assumption** Employment is a direct route to LIAM  
i.e. once employed, a migrant is sure to acquire Swedish

**Typical trajectory** Migrant finds work, quits Sfi  
Priority = job, not Swedish (takes job that requires limited Swedish)

**Research finding\*** Work may offer little or no language learning  
due to lack of workplace support

**Innovative thinking\*\*** Share responsibility for LIAM more widely  
to embed support for language learning into activities of daily living

\*Sandwall, K. (2010), "I Learn More at School": A Critical Perspective on Workplace-Related Second Language Learning In and Out of School. *TESOL QUARTERLY* Vol. 44, No. 3, September 2010

\*\*Clark, B., Lindemalm, K. (eds) (2011), *Språkskap – Swedish as a Social Language*. Sweden: Ergonomidesign, Folkuniversitetet and Interactive Institute. pp 63-64 [www.tii.se/projects/sprakskap](http://www.tii.se/projects/sprakskap)

# Workforce development

## Early 2000s

City of Stockholm invests in large **competence development** for public sector workers (schools, social services, municipal services)

Programme based on **formal learning** delivered in adult ed colleges

Participation voluntary – 45k people trained over four-year period

**But...** Cohort of staff **resistant to participation**, poor results when pressured from managers – resistance linked to lack of confidence/motivation, for **migrant staff** associated with **limited Swedish**

## Low language levels = shock to system

Contradicts assumption re work guaranteeing language skills

**Important issue** ≈ **50% of adult social care workforce = migrants**

# Staff profiles

Work experience + educational background of 253 staff

(Self-reported by participants in Projekt SpråkSam)

## Years in elderly care

0-6 years	21%
7-9 years	31%
Over 10 years	48%

## Years in school\*

0-6 years	20%
7-9 years	18%
10-12 years	38%
Over 12 years	24%

*\*May mean 'a few days a week, when there was no war'*



# Questions

**Workforce development Q** How to engage & support staff with limited Swedish to improve language + vocational skills?

**LIAM Q** How to realise potential of work for language learning?

## Extended opportunity to investigate Qs

**2007-08** APU-projektet (local funding)

**2009-11** SpråkSam (ESF funded)

**2011-13** ArbetSam (ESF funded)

*Series of workforce development projects in adult social care in Stockholm region*

**2013-15** TDAR (LLP funded) – Transfer of Innovation to DE, **UK**, ES, B

# Dynamics

**Overall objective** **Workforce development** to support service modernisation required by growing complexity of care work

**Agenda** = 'professionalisation' – i.e. enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding to deliver more complex services e.g. dementia care

**Existing WD model for care** Recruit new entrants pre-qualified via relevant upper-secondary school vocational courses, but...

...lack of new entrants obliges employers to recruit unqualified adults, often migrants with limited Swedish

Access to formal learning **very limited** once in employment due to **VET structure + operational & funding constraints**

**Challenge** Create new WD model consistent with needs + constraints

# Answers

Comprehensive system of **workplace learning** incorporating

- **Formal learning** Workplace opportunities to achieve national vocational qualifications with Swedish language support
- **Non-formal learning** New structures + roles to reinforce learning via management systems (i.e. supervision, team meetings etc)
- **Informal learning** Systems to connect formal and non-formal learning with everyday work activity and interactions with colleagues

**Inclusive** Addresses needs of all staff, migrant + non-migrant

**Partnership-based** Connects employers, VET providers, Sfi learning

**Focus on reflective learning, language development for all staff**

# Large scale projects

- **Formal learning** Care and Swedish language skills for >1000 staff in the Stockholm region – 3 hours/week, 40 weeks/year, 1-2 years
- **Support for non-formal learning** Training for managers, key personnel in >100 workplaces employing 10 000 staff
- **Extensive partnerships** Employers, VET providers, Sfi, Universities of Stockholm, Södertörn – researchers involved in development of new approaches

Plus cooperation with Swedish Municipal Workers' Union, Stockholm County board, partners in other European countries

# Key elements of approach (for LIAM at work)

Sector-based approach: workforce development / quality improvement

Language treated as core competence

Managers engaged as full partners in learning process (planning, delivery, eval)

Creation of two new workplace roles for staff: reflective discussion leader and **language advocate** (champion) to sustain workplace focus on language and offer individual colleagues ad hoc support

Sustainable language development via non-formal and informal learning

Workforce development partnership (employers-VET-Sfi)

Local employer

Manager  
**Language advocate**  
Reflective discussion leader

Language development through workplace learning: VET with language support, reflective discussion + language advocate support

# Lessons for LIAM

- Employment no guarantee of language learning
- Responsibility for language development must be shared between worker, employer, colleagues and state
- Linking language learning to job learning is motivational
- Engagement from managers key to individual progress
- Cooperation between education and workplace on structural, organisational and individual levels is essential

# ArbetSam approach in English

Watch an excellent film (8 mins)

Download high-quality resources

All available free from [www.aldrecentrum.se/TDAR/](http://www.aldrecentrum.se/TDAR/)

Description of  
SpråkSam  
approach

Council of Europe's  
language reference levels  
contextualised for work in  
adult social care

Ask for the outline by email

Full description of ArbetSam approach

Manager's overview





# Contact and more information

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