

# LPYL -

**School library  
development  
in South Africa and  
Sweden**



[BiS Home](http://foreningenbis.org/lpyl/)

## Library Practice for Young Learners ( LPYL)

# A Library Week in Stockholm

At the end of September this 1997 the first field trip to Sweden took place. Part of the BiS / LIWO Libraries for Young Learners Project, eleven participants took part in the trip that was mainly focused on Stockholm and its surrounds. Participants included the heads of school library departments in each province, the coordinator of the project and a representative from the department of national education. Although the tour came at a difficult time as department heads grappled with placing school libraries at the top of the wish list in education, it was clear that the participants gained insight and motivation from the exchange.

"This first trip was aimed as an introduction to the project," explains Cathy Stadler, joint coordinator. "The programme included visits to various "best practices" models in Sweden to stimulate ideas and about what would work in South Africa." It was also where the selection criteria were decided for the 18 librarians who are to visit Sweden as part of the exchange trip. The selection criteria have been debated further in South Africa to allow provincial delegates to make their selection based on their specific needs. This means for example that a media advisor could be paired with a librarian from the same school circuit, instead of simply two school librarians from primary and secondary schools.

The field trips in Sweden included trips to school libraries such as Edboskolan primary school and other library services in Sweden that support young learners.

At Edboskolan Helen Amborn, one of the school teacher librarians, explained how the library is structured, and the way in which the library has become an integral part of the school. A theme is selected and then integrated throughout the school across subjects.

"All subjects that are taught must involve the school library. All subjects teachers support the approach to integrate the school library in our teaching," she explained.

The school has an open approach to teaching and the theme that is chosen for a term is integrated into all subjects. Children are also put into age ranges rather than into set groups, such as six to nine year olds.

Amborn points out that their results have been good. "Teachers at higher education institutions say our graduates student are good pupils, and are used to studying on their own from start to end."

"We believe that this approach ensures that students are employable when they graduate."

The group also visited the National Agency for Education. Kerstin Weyler, director of education gave a presentation on the structure of the education system in Sweden. She pointed out that their system is decentralised compared to South Africa with more involvement from the local authorities. She outlined the reforms that Sweden had undergone and Ingrid Olmander gave some insights into the place of libraries in the system - which varies from school to school.

One of the participants pointed out one of the differences - that South African local authorities are probably not in a position to take over responsibilities for libraries and run these services successfully.

A field trip to Sofiaskolan secondary school gave an insight into a

distance education project that makes use of computer technology. The school has set up a communication system that allows students from all over the world to dial in and participate in lessons. Peter Lindquest explained that the school was started in 1994.

"The Swedish government wanted faster communication with students abroad. Scholars connect once a day to change information during the day. This direct distance education gives some student in Australia or the USA direct access to mail communications. We have built up a school similar to this (physical) school. We write down what is taught and teach in cyberspace. We have built a virtual school yard where students can communicate with each other. They can learn about new things that are going on in Sweden."

Library education is being taught across the Internet and Eva Jonsby, based at Sofiaskolan, explained how she was using the Internet to provide education to the school librarians.

"The new media of the Internet demands new skills from librarians. We have to guide students and patrons' demands for development new skills and method of working need to further education. I think it is important for librarians to use the Internet as a resource."

She has established an online teaching course. "These are all online. The course is about the Internet and is presented in five parts. There is a section to teach students about the Internet browser Netscape, and covers topics like creating bookmarks, FTP Telnet connections."

Part two concentrates on searching electronic documents, evaluating different search tools - how you can use them and which are the most effective. There is also a section on the evaluation of source documents and training in some basics such as HTML (hyper text markup language).

"Many librarians have told me that when they have inspiration this links in with their daily work - if you are going to change things then you need to know how to do it," emphasised Jonsby. Part four of the course concentrates on the legal aspects regarding the law and the Internet mostly on copyright. Part five concentrates on the future role of librarian and library and raises issues such as whether the librarian and library will survive in the new virtual age.

"This course is for people with limited skill - anyone can attend the conferences, they can ask questions about anything related to the course or librarians in the new technology librarian. We have a conference online. This is a busy conference and we have discussions mostly around technical problems." The course has to be completed online so it assumes that librarians have access to the Internet. The course is effective in Sweden because librarians are dispersed around the country.

Tensta library was visited by the group, and librarian Agneta Ehnmark explained the challenges of working with immigrants and meeting their reading needs, as well as outlining the struggle to prevent the library from closing down.

The librarians at Tensta have realised the importance of introducing children to books early on. "We give a book to the children as a gift. This includes traditional children's literature. These books are subsidised by the government. In our Book Talks children teach themselves a love of literature," said Ehnmark, head of the library.

Other speakers at the library presentation gave an insight into the provision of library services to Sweden's substantial immigrant population.

The municipality of Upplands Väsby has a centralised school library service and it provided an insight into a support service for school library services. The service is intended to support the work that school librarians do in the area and does so in a number of different ways -

mentaries do in the area and does so in a number of different ways through training and providing access to resources, as well as technical support.

Anna-Clara Edin, head of the school library service, pointed out there is a need for this service.

"The media center was started in 1980 to establish school libraries. We have an exhibition of books and we have most of the books that publishers sell. Teachers come here to compare these books before they make decision to buy them for their school. We have education radio programs that are financed by the government. These are taped and lent out to the different schools-learning languages, chemistry etc. We think that text picture and sound can and should complement each other. It is very important to support the school librarian. The school librarians have no formal education and hence are usually chosen from permanent staff."

Other field trips for the group included visits to Gribby Gard - a combined school and public library, Skederid (rural combined public and school library) as well as an evening at the National Board of Cultural Affairs.

The last two days in Stockholm consisted of lectures from Lena Skoglund and Louise Limberg. Both speakers looked at the important role of the school library in education. The tour was interspersed with various cultural activities such as visits to the Royal Library.

Participants on the tour were positive about the visits. "Swedish and South African libraries are at different levels of development, and different milieus. A similarity was noticeable in the thinking, attitude and hopes of the Swedish and South African participants," said one tour delegate.

Berth Kitching from the Free State commented, "In Sweden there is not a national school library policy. Provision fundraising and decision making is decentralised to local municipality level. It was encouraging to hear the Swedish appreciation for the existence and quality of the South African school policy document and the affirmation of having a policy that allows for a variety of school library models. In this regard the Swedish stakeholders expressed a need to follow the South African example and formalise a school library policy."

"Teacher's and parents have a joint responsibility towards the education of the child," said Nowmawethu Jonas from the Eastern Cape. "The commitment of teachers in their work and parental involvement is astonishing. South Africa must provide the infrastructure and resources. Both countries are searching for quality in education. Sweden is in a better position because they have the infrastructure and personnel. South Africa still has to build more schools," she concluded. Nomvuko Nomga added: "School libraries are change agents in curriculum development. As teaching aids they increase the quality of teaching - outcomes based methods. They are necessary to implement the objectives of the new curriculum." She pointed out that the tour had been extremely well organised and that the Swedish hosts had done a magnificent job.

The delegates have returned to South Africa to begin the selection of two librarians from each province. This process will be finalised by February 1998 when some BiS members will visit South Africa to meet with the exchange librarians and to plan the second visit..

List of delegates in South Africa

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:  
June Matlala  
Chief Education Specialist  
Centre for Educational Technology & Distance Education

## PRETORIA

## PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

Esdre Keller

Directorate: Support Services

Library & Information Services, Education Department,  
Gauteng,

JOHANNESBURG

Bertha Kitching

Directorate: Education Institute

Schools Capacitation :Education Department

Free State

BLOEMFONTEIN

Vatiswa Magwentshu

Provincial Library and Archival Services

Northern Cape Education Department

KIMBERLEY

Lyne Metcalfe

EDULIS

Education Department Western Cape

CAPE TOWN

Nomawethu Jonas

Provincial Library

Eastern Cape

KING WILLIAMS TOWN

Meshack Mulaudzi

Library and Information Service

Northern Province

PIETERSBURG

Sam Ndawo

Education Department

Mpumalanga

MIDDELBURG

Nomvuko Nomnga

Provincial Library Services

Department of Education, Sport &amp; Recreation

North West Province

MMABATHO

Sibongile Nzimande

School Library Service

Kwazulu-Natal

LADYSMITH

## PROJECT COORDINATORS

IMC

Cathy Stadler

Maureen Mosselson

IMC

Johannesburg

**South African Project Group**Jenni Karlsson e-mail: [KARLSSON@MTB.und-ac.za](mailto:KARLSSON@MTB.und-ac.za)Cathy Stadler e-mail: [computing@icon.co.za](mailto:computing@icon.co.za)Maureen Mosselson e-mail: [mosson@iafrica.com](mailto:mosson@iafrica.com)**Swedish Project Group**

Lennart Wettmark e-mail: [lennart.wettmark@sag.karlstad.se](mailto:lennart.wettmark@sag.karlstad.se)

Lena Lundgren e-mail: [lena.lundgren@ssb.stockholm.se](mailto:lena.lundgren@ssb.stockholm.se)

BiS Aug 1997; transl chl

[To phase 1 - index](#)

[Up](#)