

# European Integration Network study visit in Västra Götaland, Sweden

8-9 February 2017

“Multi stakeholder approach for the integration of  
refugees”



## Facts on Sweden, Västra Götaland and integration 2014-2016

- Västra Götaland is like miniature version of Scandinavia with the sea, lakes and the forests in the western part of Sweden, 1,7 M inhabitants, 130 nationalities (Sweden 10 M), 49 municipalities
- More than half of the inhabitants – 971 000 inhabitants live in the Gothenburg region (13 municipalities). The rest is distributed between the sub-regions of Sjuhärad around Borås, Skaraborg with Skövde as the main city and Fyrbodal where the main cities are Vänersborg, Trollhättan and Uddevalla.
- The population density varies from six people per square kilometer in Dals-Ed to just over 1000 people in Gothenburg.
- Asylum seekers per year in Sweden:  
2014: 81 301, 2015: 162 877, 2016: 28 939

In 2015 Sweden granted 350 asylum applications per 100 000 inhabitants- compared to 180 per 100 000 inhabitants in Germany that in absolute numbers received most asylum seekers in the EU.

### Region Västra Götaland

Region Västra Götaland is governed by democratically elected politicians and the main responsibilities are healthcare, public transportation and infrastructure planning and is also responsible for coordinating and implementing the regional development and growth strategy Västra Götaland 2020.

- 18 hospitals, 200 primary care units, 175 dental clinics, 6 Folk High Schools, 3 agricultural colleges
- Regional growth and development, business development, public transportation, infrastructure planning, culture 5 billion Euro annual budget
- 53,000 employees

### The reception of refugees in Sweden

Sweden has a long tradition of providing security to people fleeing war, persecution and oppression. In 2015, Sweden experienced the largest per-capita inflow of asylum seekers ever recorded in an OECD country. Bearing mind that Sweden has a population of around 10 million (9.85), in 2015 we received 163 000 (162 877) applications for asylum. Over 70 000 of the asylum seekers that came to Sweden were children and 35 000 of them were unaccompanied minors.

In 2016, 28 939 people applied for asylum in Sweden, an 82 percent decrease compared to 2015 (162 877), but near the average for the years 2000-2014 (33 000 yearly). Of these asylum seekers 2 199 were unaccompanied minors – a decrease with 94 per cent since 2015. The average number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Sweden the years 2000-2014 were 3 905 yearly.

The largest group of asylum seekers in 2016 (5 457) were from Syria, followed by Afghanistan (2969) and Iraq (2755), Somalia (1646) and Iran (1279). For unaccompanied asylum seeking minors Afghanistan was the most common country of origin in 2016 (665) followed by Somalia (421) and Syria (180), Morocco (144) and Ethiopia (133).

### Granted resident permits

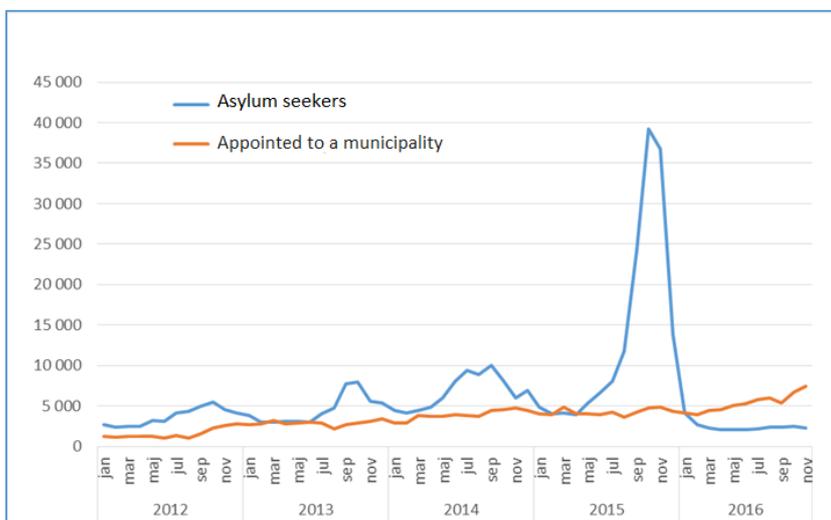
67 258 persons were granted humanitarian, international or subsidiary protection in Sweden in 2016.

By far the most common country of origin was Syria (44 218), followed by Eritrea (5 995), Stateless (5 833), Afghanistan (3 464), Iraq (1 745) and Somalia (1 723).

15 148 persons were granted resident permit as a family member to a person granted humanitarian, international or subsidiary protection.

Due to the high number of asylum seekers in 2015 there is a backlog at the Migration agency and many asylum seekers from 2015 are still waiting for a decision.

### Asylum seekers per month from 2011-December 2016, Sweden



Asylum seekers (blue) and appointed to a municipality (red). "Appointed to a municipality" means an asylum seeker who have been granted residence and been registered as citizen in a municipality.

Last December 2016 nearly 18 000 people in Västra Götaland were enrolled in the Migration Board's reception system, among them around 6000 arranged for their own accommodation. Just over 4 000 of the residents are unaccompanied children. The number enrolled has decreased by about 10 000 people since last year. The number of people in the reception system per capita varies greatly



## Region Västra Götaland's regional development initiatives aimed at asylum seekers and new arrivals

With a robust labour market and a strongly equipped public sector, Västra Götaland is well positioned to take on the challenges presented by migration. Successful integration into Swedish society requires close collaboration between various stakeholders in the community. This text reflects the role of Region Västra Götaland and its position with regard to asylum seekers and new arrivals from a regional development perspective (Ref. No. RUN 2016-02073).

### Starting points for regional development initiatives aimed at asylum seekers and new arrivals

In 2015 the number of refugees entering the country rose significantly. Region Västra Götaland views refugees and new arrivals as assets to our society and as potential employees and entrepreneurs. Good, effective reception of refugees is vitally important to the future development of Västra Götaland. The driving force and entrepreneurial capability among those who have moved to Sweden, in combination with their new, sought-after knowledge and skills, are resources that can be utilised to create the conditions necessary to ensure the region remains attractive and competitive.

Region Västra Götaland's regional development remit includes coordinating the implementation of the regional development strategy. The aim is to bring about an inclusive society, meaning the conditions that are essential for individuals, organisations and companies to develop and grow.

Good healthcare, education, training, cultural activities and establishment in the labour market are fundamental if individuals are to become involved in community life and be in a position where they are able to assume personal responsibility and develop a sense of belonging.

Implementation of key initiatives designed to speed up the path to self-sufficiency will help to reduce the need for income support and will mitigate the feeling of exclusion.

### The task and role of Region Västra Götaland from a regional development perspective

As a politically governed organisation, Region Västra Götaland has been commissioned to coordinate the regional development programme. Region Västra Götaland is also the largest employer in the country with 53,000 employees.

Cross-sectoral collaboration – with industry, the education sector, public agencies, municipal authorities and civil society – is crucial if new arrivals are to become established in the region.

At present, the Migration Agency is responsible for asylum seekers whilst the Public Employment Service and municipal authorities are responsible for helping new arrivals – i.e. those who have been granted a residence permit – to become established.

Civil society has a key part to play in the integration, involvement and humanitarian reception of refugees. With effect from 2017, the county administrative boards will have the government-assigned task of coordinating and organising early initiatives

for asylum seekers, including language training and organised employment. Based on its regional development remit, Region Västra Götaland has an important role to play in working together with the local authorities on the reception of refugees. Long-term strategic work and carefully defined activities reinforce and complement each other while at the same time provide good prerequisites for ensuring that a high degree of efficiency is maintained in Region Västra Götaland's work.

#### Regional activities for asylum seekers and new arrivals

The waiting time for an individual to have their asylum application reviewed is increasing in line with the rise in the number of refugees entering Sweden. In the interim, an asylum seeker finds him or herself in no-man's land with limited opportunities to play an active part in community life. To reduce the risk of the exclusion gap widening even further, Region Västra Götaland is also focusing on refugees who are in the asylum-seeking phase. By making this waiting period meaningful, conditions for asylum seekers and new arrivals who are in the process of becoming established in Swedish society are improved, allowing them to live an independent life, thus reducing the risk of exclusion. With this in mind, Region Västra Götaland has opted to focus its resources on the following areas:

- Provision of language training during the asylum-seeking phase
- Participation in cultural life, leisure activities and sport
- Access to civil society and networks
- [Facilitating mobility through special public transport arrangements](#)
- Promotion of intercultural dialogue
- [The opportunity to secure a work experience placement, a job or self-employment](#)
- Using the validation process to promote matching in occupations in which there is a shortage of qualified and experienced workers
- Formulation of plans aimed at creating jobs for new arrivals within the organisation of Region Västra Götaland
- Involvement in the Public Employment Service "fast-track" scheme to help new arrivals become established
- Stimulation of entrepreneurship and enterprise

Region Västra Götaland initiates, develop and co-finances projects aiming to strengthen integration. The remit of Region Västra Götaland is also to acknowledge and share good practice initiated from stakeholders in Västra Götaland. Cooperation with the civil society and acknowledgment of voluntary initiatives is important.

Contact: [www.vgregion.se](http://www.vgregion.se)

<http://www.vgregion.se/sv/Vastra-Gotalandsregionen/startside/Om-Vastra-Gotalandsregionen/Leva-och-bo-i-Vastra-Gotaland1/Flykting/Nyheter-om-flyktingsituationen/>

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# The County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland

Sweden is divided into twenty-one counties; each county has a County Administrative Board and a county governor. The County Administrative Board is the representative of the Government in the region and the coordinating body for State activities in the county. We are a link between people and 49 municipalities of Västra Götaland on the one hand, and between the government, Parliament and national authorities on the other.

The County Administrative Board has a broad area of responsibility. The Board works on issues concerning the environment, nature, social development, animal protection, gender equality, integration, infrastructure and housing, etc. The County Administrative Board's task is to coordinate these and other areas of public responsibility to achieve efficient solutions for a sustainable society in which economic development, the environment and social welfare are interlinked. The County Administrative Board also has the task of ensuring that the county's citizens receive the level of service the Government has decided on, that municipalities and companies comply with laws and regulations and that nationwide objectives adopted by the Government are achieved in Västra Götaland. Through collaboration with municipalities we try to create good conditions in society for the county's citizen – both private individuals and entrepreneurs. Everyone should, on equal terms, be provided secure living conditions, easy and safe to work and live in.

## Integration - Efforts for newcomers and unaccompanied minors

The County Administrative Board operates and participates in the planning, organisation and implementation of actions for new arrivals. This takes place at both a national, regional and local level in cooperation with municipalities, government agencies, organisations and associations.

We will help to ensure that the municipalities are prepared to receive new arrivals and unaccompanied minors. We do this in several ways, including by agreements with the municipalities about the reception of newcomers and negotiating with the municipalities regarding the reception of unaccompanied minors.

The County Administrative Board's task is to support the municipalities in the coordination of municipal activities such as Swedish for Immigrants and civic orientation. Additionally we allocate government grants to municipalities to facilitate settlement, raise the municipalities' preparedness and reception capacity and develop activities with refugee guides and family contacts. We will also follow up the organization and implementation of measures for newcomers and unaccompanied children, at both a regional and municipal level.

Contact: <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/VastraGotaland>



LÄNSSTYRELSEN  
VÄSTRA GÖTALANDS LÄN



REGION  
VÄSTRA GÖTALAND

## Arbetsförmedlingen

- the Swedish Public Employment Service, in short

Arbetsförmedlingen give service for employers and jobseekers. Arbetsförmedlingen is the largest employment agency in Sweden and are assigned our mission by the parliament and the government. We are to improve the labour market by:

- bringing together those who are looking for work and those who are looking for labour
- giving priority to those who are far from the labour market
- contributing to increased employment in the long term

Arbetsförmedlingen is an active member of the European network of public employment agencies and also runs and participates in projects around the world, financed by SIDA and the EU. Arbetsförmedlingen is a member of the committee of the international organisation Wapes (the World Association of Public Employment Services).

### Organisation and employees (2015)

- 280 local employment offices, which are clustered into eleven market areas
- 14 000 employees on average in 2015
- 67 percent are women
- The average age is 45

### Our finances in 2016

- Appropriations and other available funds amount to 77 billion SEK, of which
- 13 billion for wage subsidies and other measures for individuals with a functional disability
- 30 billion for unemployment benefit and activity support
- 8 billion for wages, premises and operating costs
- around 11 billion for purchase of labour market programmes and measures
- 8 billion for the introduction programme
- 7 billion for New Start Jobs and Vocational Introduction Employment

Our website: [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)



## The University of Gothenburg welcomes refugees

The University of Gothenburg is one of the largest universities in Sweden. The university is a broad organisation with eight faculties and encompasses almost all aspects of academics and scientific life. It offers research of excellence in a number of fields. Research of particular excellence can be found in for example Cell biology, Metabolism, Environmental Economics, Marine Research, Cultural Heritage, Addiction Psychology, Language Technology. Inter-disciplinary research to meet global societal challenges is an area of particular strength. Here new research environments have been created, such as the centre for study of Antibiotics resistance, the Centre for Ageing and Health, the Centre for Collective Action Research.

The University of Gothenburg is a broad university and offers education in almost all fields and in the form of professional programs as well as independent courses. There are strong educational programs in the health sector, a large teachers' training program as well as programs in law, psychology, social work, liberal arts, political science, economics, and environmental sciences among other areas. About 40,000 students take part of education on a yearly basis. The university offers education on all three levels. The university is a city university, with campus areas integrated in various parts of the city. This makes the university highly popular among students and provides for close collaboration and exchange with the city. The university also works closely together with Chalmers University, which provides education and research in engineering, technology and architecture.

The University of Gothenburg is solidly based on fundamental values such as human rights and equal values, sustainable development, social responsibility and global commitment. Based on those values, the University of Gothenburg has taken a leading role among the universities and colleges in Sweden in implementing activities in order to facilitate for the integration, establishment and inclusion of refugees and newly arrived. Some of those activities are listed below:

- Information and guidance for newly arrived and asylum seekers about higher education and about the University of Gothenburg and the University of Chalmers (together with Chalmers)
- Individual guidance for newly arrived who are interested in higher education.
- Offers some information in Arabic.
- Offers a new course in the Swedish language and introduction to university studies
- Complementary education in educations in health professions, as well as new ones in social work, pharmacy, teaching, and as biomedical scientists.
- "Fast track" for teachers
- The program in social work offers an introduction to Swedish society for newly arrived young boys from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Morocco in one of the district areas of the city
- Offers 100 internship places at different sections of the university
- Works with trying to facilitate validation and assessment of competences.
- Offers open lectures on Global challenges.

- Has established an inter-disciplinary and inter-faculty research centre for the study of migration and refugees.
- Offers research seminars on migration and refugees in order to facilitate cooperation among researchers in different disciplines
- Works extensively with making research and knowledge useful for societal actors
- Has offered sanctuary positions for altogether four researchers within the Scholars at Risk network
- Works closely and strategically with the Västra Götaland region, the city of Gothenburg, the National Employment Agency, the County Government, the ideational sector and other actors in order to facilitate integration and establishment.
- Coordinates the Swedish section (14 universities and colleges) within the Scholars at Risk network
- Had undertaken a pilot project of providing higher education courses for Syrian refugees in Jordan

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# Validering Väst

## – a support structure for validation of non-formal and informal learning

Validering means validation and Väst means west (the west side of Sweden).

Validering Väst is a cooperation between the four Federations of municipalities in Västra Götaland and VGR. The funding mainly comes from Region Västra Götaland.

Our mission is to build structures and give proactive support in validation related matters to all relevant organizations.

Example of support: method-, process- and quality development, information, education, network, guidance, coordination and IT-tool. The duration of the support can be from 5 minutes over phone to a 3 years involvement in a project.

Example of organizations which use our support; The Employment service (national, regional, local), municipalities, other organizations in the public sector, organizations in the third sector, companies, branch organizations (national and regional), schools (from secondary school to university), different projects and citizens.

In addition to the parties above Validering Väst have close cooperation with; the national agency for education, the national agency for higher vocational education, the national delegation for validation (2015-2019), unions, scientists, and others.

The main target groups today are immigrants and people outside the ordinary labour market. To adapt the validation processes and validation tools are crucial to give those target groups a fair chance to show their real competence.

Contact: <http://www.valideringvast.se/>



## Region Västra Götaland – Health Care

### Health in Sweden for Asylum seekers and newly arrived

In the summer of 2016 the Ministry of Social Affairs granted Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) resources to spread the methods and materials that can contribute to a positive health development for newly arrived and asylum seekers in the whole of Sweden. In September 2016 the Health and medical care committee (HSS) made a decision to allocate funds to disseminate the education initiative proposed by SKL for the entire Region Västra Götaland. The project Health in Sweden for asylum seekers and newly arrived was created. The goal is to increase the power and the ability for asylum seekers and newly arrived, to manage their own lives, to work in the community and to experience good health. Furthermore, the pressure from asylum seekers and newly arrived on the existing structures in the health care system, will be reduced.

Initial activities are cultural and language adapted Health Information and Health Support Groups for those who wants to participate. The activities will be provided by four teams and they will use an outreach approach to reach the target population.

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## Migration and Integration, City of Gothenburg, Sweden

Gothenburg has historically always been a town coloured by international trends, thanks to its location by the sea, still being the largest port in the Nordic countries.

Today, Gothenburg continues to grow with “Gothenburgers” from all over the world. 24.5 % of the population of 548 190 people are born in another country (for instance in Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Finland, Yugoslavia, Poland, Turkey, Syria, China and in other countries, 2015).

The year 2015 was historically unique. Never before have so many refugees come to Sweden and Gothenburg in such a short time. A total of 162 877 people sought asylum in Sweden that year. 70 384 were children and half of them were unaccompanied.

Many of them, came to Gothenburg. 6 193 asylum seekers lived in Gothenburg in December 31, 2015. 40% of them were children. 2 468 people in Gothenburg got a residence permit during 2015, 35% were children (0-18 years).

The numbers dropped dramatically when the government introduced new, strict rules and laws, to under 29 000 asylum-seekers in Sweden in total 2016.

Gothenburg, already known as a highly segregated town, is now facing the challenge of how to integrate the newly arrived inhabitants.

One of the biggest problems, is the lack of housing which leads to an uneven rental market and poor housing standards. The City Council has had to find temporary solutions to solve the housing problem, leading to a situation where some people have to live on camping sites and in dorms.

Sweden has a tradition of giving permanent residence permits, but from now on they will be temporary. Family reunification will also be tougher. There is a concern over how both asylum-seekers and persons with residence permit are affected by stress because of these new laws and the circumstances.

Therefore, it is even more important to focus on the positive efforts for integration.

### The Establishment System

Refugees in the ages 20-64 years old who have received residence permits, are referred to the State Employment Agency in order to make a plan for establishment. The aim is that a newly arrived person as quickly as possible will learn Swedish, get closer to the labour market to become financially independent. During the establishment period, the individual can take part in various activities, such as learning Swedish and study civic orientation and training.

Civic orientation is organized by the municipal Integration Centre which is a meeting place for migrants and Swedes with many different services (see details further down).

Registrations for the language courses are made from the municipal Labour Market and Adult Education Administration which is also responsible for education and

labour market initiatives for people who are far from the labour market (see details further down).

Gothenburg consists of ten city districts which are responsible for preschool and school for children.

Many others make important contributions for refugees, especially NGOs offering different kinds of activities for asylum seekers.

One can see how Swedish society is mobilizing both for and against immigration. On the one hand, xenophobic political parties and movements have been making progress, on the other hand there is a widespread strongly emerging commitment to contribute to long-term integration for the common good. One thing is certain; there has to be several actors who take part in the integration of the refugees and other immigrants, in the public sector, in the civic sector and in the business sector. Public sector has to widen its perspective and create new, more flexible organizations to be able to cope with the challenge together with all other actors. If possible - we will manage to make a change.

#### The Labour Market and Adult Education Administration

The administration is responsible for municipal adult education, specific education for adults and for Swedish for immigrants (SFI). The administration is also responsible for the labour market measures. This means that we are working with organizing employment measures and for taking the initiatives needed to improve the employment alternatives for those far away from the labour market.

During 2016 we opened two so called competence centres for extra support for individuals that are close to enter the labour market or to start an education. To be allowed to participate in the support given by a competence centre, an individual must be involved in any program or intervention offered by the social services in any of our city districts (there are 10 city districts in Gothenburg). Another two competence centres will open in 2017.

We have approximately 25 000 students per year, divided on the following categories:

- 10 800 in Swedish for immigrants (SFI)
- 11 800 in adult education on high school-level
- 2 900 in elementary adult education
- 200 in specific education for adults

#### The Integration Centre Gothenburg

The Integration Centre Gothenburg is a meeting place for migrants and Swedes.

#### At the Integration Centre newcomers may:

- Study civic orientation and learn more about Swedish society. The course provides important information for a good start in Sweden. It covers everything from practical everyday life, to how Swedish society works, for example the individual's rights and responsibilities. The course is held in a dialogue form and in the participants' mother tongue. 2 298 persons registered for the course in 2016.
- Get help at the information office in your mother tongue with information and

advice, for instance translating forms and contacting different authorities. This office has a long cue of visitors during all opening hours.

- Join city tours and get to know Gothenburg.

#### Other services

- The Refugee Guide/Language Friend is a program that brings Swedes and migrants together through personal contacts in their leisure time; with families, in groups or individually. Nearly 2 000 people wanted to become guides in 2015.
- You can subscribe to the Pathfinder — a mentoring program that inspires newcomers to reach their professional goals.
- The Integration Centre offers training and skills development including seminars, workshops and newsletters.
- There is also a platform for cooperation on integration with NGOs.

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Do you want to know more? Please, contact us!

Email: [samhallsorientering@socialresurs.goteborg.se](mailto:samhallsorientering@socialresurs.goteborg.se). Phone: +46 31-367 91 50.

Visit: Andra Långgatan 19 (stop: Järntorget).

Address: Integrations centrum, Box 7010, S-402 31 Gothenburg, Sweden.

[www.goteborg.se/integrationscentrum](http://www.goteborg.se/integrationscentrum),

[www.facebook.com/IntegrationscentrumGoteborg](https://www.facebook.com/IntegrationscentrumGoteborg), [www.facebook.com/Flyktingguide](https://www.facebook.com/Flyktingguide)



**Gothenburgs Stad**  
Arbetsmarknad och vuxenutbildning

## Universeum

### – the Nordic region’s largest Science Centre

Animals and nature, new technology and exciting experiments, all under one roof in Northern Europe's most visited science centre. The goal is to increase children and adolescents interest in science, technology and mathematics.

Children and young people in Sweden are not interested enough in science and technology. If the trend is not turning, it means ultimately that these kind of skills will be missing in the labour market. How do you solve such a thing?

Representatives from Chalmers University, Göteborg Region Association of Local Authorities, the University of Gothenburg and the West Swedish Chamber of Commerce took on the task and soon returned with an interesting suggestion: Why not build a science centre in central Gothenburg and allow children and adolescents to play up knowledge? Said and done. On 31 August 1999 the creation of Universeum begun.

Two years later it was there. A 10,000-square-foot science centre, where nature and animals mixed with new technology and exciting experiments. And the mission, to attract young people to discover the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics, appear to succeed. Since the premiere over seven million people has visited Universeum.

At Universeum every day is an adventure. The big building in the heart of Gothenburg brings together animals, nature, technology and masses of experiments. In just one day you can go on safari in the rainforest, head out into space, and dive into the depths of the world’s oceans and walk through the Swedish wilderness.

Universeum offers school programs from preschool to upper secondary school and teachers training to show new ways to pursue pleasurable and inspiring teaching and work. Universeum works systematically with integration and diversity.

Contact Universeum

Phone: +46 31–335 64 50

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Visiting address:

Södra vägen 50

Gothenburg



## Restad Gård – Swedens largest asylum seekers accommodation

Restad Gård is a former mental hospital area located just outside Vänersborg city. The estate is above 40 hectare and contains buildings of totally 50.000 sq.mtr. for a variation of use.

It is a mixed society of which the operations belonging to asylum seekers occupies about 60 % of the building area.

Restad Gård has been housing asylum seekers since the autumn of 2013. At present 1.200 asylum seekers live here. The camp is a place where the residents can enjoy good living conditions with self-household in nice surroundings. That is the "hardware" part of Restad Gård. Beyond that there has been continuously development of the "software" part.

The vision of Restad Gård is to provide the necessary tools and encourage an interest to engage in the Swedish society from the day the refugees arrive. That implies to deliver an asylum camp with excellent conditions and services for asylum seekers and activities from day 1 with basic information, work, studies, leisure, culture and language.

The operator of Restad Gård is a private company, but the supply of services to the residents come from a variety of efforts from volunteers / third sector, Support Group (the residents own empowerment organisation), the municipality and suppliers of several state programs.

Teach residents to understand and speak daily Swedish during their stay is first priority. Restad Gård has developed its own educational method and material in order to succeed with this. Right now 130 adults are studying daily Swedish at the camp in a 5 - 8 weeks course. These courses are pretty intense with 3-4 days a week and 3-4 hours a day. Besides adult courses all children below 18 years are studying at municipal schools either at Restad or in the city.

Based on our experiences the last 3,5 years Restad Gård believe that a campus-like living and study situation at the right location offers the best starting point for effective integration in large scale. In a campus like Restad Gård you enjoy a critical mass of residents and suppliers. That is crucial in order to achieve cost-effective services with high quality.

Contact: <http://restadgard.se/>



## Support Group Network

The Support group was formed in 2014 by a group, consisting of a few refugees living in Sweden's largest reception centre Restad Gård, housing around 1300 asylum seekers. In consultation with some Swedish volunteers they began to coordinate the dispensing of clothing and various household goods. To end up in a situation where they had no work or given task was something that was foreign to these refugees. They were thinking about what could be done to change this meaningless situation and realized that the initiative had to come from inside the camp. The refugees also had the feeling that the Swedes were afraid of the refugees and that there was a distrust of them.

To show the community the truth about the people living at the reception centre and to overcome misunderstandings between the Swedes and the refugees the small group decided to organize a cultural event. This was because it saw culture as a way to overcome the language barriers and open doors between people. They found all talents they wanted for the show right there among the refugees. Representatives from all nationalities, were included and showed parts of their particular culture. The event was directed both to the refugees in the camp and to the residents of the municipality of Vänersborg and was much appreciated. This gave the refugees an experience of the Swedes in the community became aware of the qualities and competencies of the residents at Restad Gård. The result of the activity experienced by the group that managed to break the ice and could now begin to build a trust between them and the locals.

During this period they also began to take an interest in identifying what skills and resources that were in the camp. An awareness had emerged around that there were many people who possessed valuable knowledge and skills for the refugees in their lives. That also find out how these people felt were considered to be of value, and therefore, a comprehensive survey of all the refugees.

The next phase of the work was to focus on interpersonal encounters. It was realized that integration and language learning worked better if people could socialize more relaxed than in a teacher-student situation. Groups started up where people with the same profession could meet and exchange information. This is to facilitate adaptation to the specific conditions that apply to professional life in Sweden. There were among others a group of doctors and teachers. The information could involve how to get their grades translated and approved, and to learn professional terms. After two years of work with the support group contacts have been established with most major companies and organizations in the neighbourhood. This created an interest of more Swedes wanting to help. Support Group became the contact between Swedish society and the refugees on Restad Gård.

The model has now spread to 13 other cities and 16 camps in Sweden and Support Group Network has become an umbrella for associations, groups and individuals who want to empower and help asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, migrants in Sweden and abroad by encouraging their own initiatives, and helping them to establish local Support Groups in their temporary or permanent areas of living.

[www.supportgroup.se](http://www.supportgroup.se) [www.facebook.com/SupportRestadGard](https://www.facebook.com/SupportRestadGard)  
<http://supportrestadgard.blogspot.se/>



# The Swedish Migration Agency

## The Mission of the Migration Agency

One of the Migration Agency's tasks is to review applications from people who want to take up permanent residence in Sweden, visit, seek protection from persecution or get Swedish citizenship.

In Sweden, the Migration Agency is the authority that considers applications from people who want to take up permanent residence in Sweden, visit, seek protection from persecution or get Swedish citizenship.

In the reception of refugees, the Migration Agency provides housing and money for food to asylum-seekers, while they wait for a decision in their asylum case. When a refugee is granted a residence permit in Sweden, we give compensation from the state to the municipalities and county councils. If the application of an asylum-seeker is rejected, the Migration Agency is actively involved in the process of having this person leave Sweden.

Once a foreign national has been granted a residence permit in Sweden, it is primarily the job of the Swedish municipalities and county councils, along with the Swedish Public Employment Services, to be involved in the integration with Swedish society.

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Startpage.html>



## Vänersborg municipality

Vänersborg municipality with its approximately 38 900 inhabitants is strategically situated at the southern point of Lake Vänern. The largest town of the municipality is Vänersborg. Besides Vänersborg there are three additional agglomerations: Brålanda, Frändefors and Vargön.

The municipality of Vänersborg has varying landscapes, containing farmlands as well as vast forests. In this context the Tableland Mountains of Halle- and Hunneberg should be mentioned particularly. The mountains are famous not only for their unique and biological values but also for The Royal Elk Hunts. A tradition that dates back to the time of Gustav Vasa.

The labour market is varied and provides employment within industry, agriculture, with small businesses, public administration and education. The largest employer is the municipality with 3 200 employees. Vänersborg offers good connections. The European route E45 runs through the municipality. The railway makes it easy to travel to Stockholm and Göteborg, among others. Vänersborg's harbour is one of the Lake Vänern ports for general cargo. The Trollhättan-Vänersborg airport offers connections with Stockholm Bromma Airport.

The largest asylum accommodation in Sweden – Restad gård – is situated in Vänersborg. Since 2007 Vänersborg municipality has an agreement with the Swedish Migration Board on accepting people that has been granted a residence permit in Sweden. Integration of newcomers is thus a natural and important part of the municipality's tasks. Several efforts have therefore been undertaken in order to aid newcomers in the process of integration. Among others the project "Språkvän" (Language friend), where Vänersborg municipality collaborates with non-profit organizations to create contacts between locals and newcomers. The project "Grön integration" (Green integration) provides the participants with knowledge about Swedish agriculture and entrepreneurship, as well as it is offering the opportunity of internship in companies in the field of agriculture. To be mentioned is also the course "Samhällsorientering" (Civic orientation) where newcomers receive important and useful information about the Swedish society.

Contact: [www.vanerborg.se](http://www.vanerborg.se)



Vänersborgs kommun

## University West

University West in Trollhättan offers education in an attractive and modern study environment with focus on giving support to the student's learning process. To strengthen this we collaborate with both work-life and civil society. Besides the education it helps us to develop research too, and make us a better partner for lifelong learning and competence development. We call the collaborative approach Work integrated learning and it is the university's profile.

There are about 11,500 students at University West and about 550 employees. Our campus is centrally located in Trollhättan and is built with the students' needs in focus. The university offers first and second cycle study programs and a variety of courses in computing and IT, economy and leadership, health and care, teaching and languages, media, the individual and society as well as technology. The university has three doctoral programs, the subjects are Education, Informatics and Production technology. The main research areas are: Child and Youth studies, learning in and for the new working life and Production technology. University West has many ongoing activities aimed for newcomers in Sweden. Here is some information about the activities.

- University West offers internships for newcomers to Sweden.
- University West arranges open lectures in a wide range of topics. The lectures are free and open for everyone! Centre for Studies of Diversity, Equality and Integration in collaboration with International Programme in Politics and Economics, IPPE, at University West arrange open seminars in international politics on the theme "What is happening in the world".
- Sweden's universities have been commissioned to do a validation effort for foreign graduates. More people will have their qualifications recognized in order to quicker get established in an education or in the labour market.
- The university hosts "Språk-café", an opportunity for newcomers to visit the university and exchange experiences with our students and staff over a cup of coffee.

University West is member of "Scholars at risk", an international network of institutions and individuals working to protect scholars and promote academic freedom

Contact: <http://www.hv.se/>



## The Red Cross Mobile Treatment Team for war traumatized individuals, Vänersborg

The number of asylum seekers in Sweden has grown significantly since the influx of refugees in 2014 and 2015. By the middle of 2016, there were more than 24 700 asylum seekers and refugees living in accommodation run by the Migration Board in Västra Götaland. Many refugees suffer from serious psychological problems due to their experiences living in warzones, fleeing from crisis situations and torture.

The Swedish Red Cross, in cooperation with Region Västra Götaland, has started a Mobile Treatment Team based in Vänersborg to serve the Fyrbodals area. The team is made up of a psychotherapist and a physiotherapist.

The initiative started as a 1-year pilot project but was extended for another year in the fall of 2016. The project's goal is the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of adults with serious psychological problems, as the development of new methods for the reception and treatment of refugees with trauma stemming from war, flight or torture.

The Mobile Treatment Team has primarily offered stabilizing treatments both individually and in group settings. During 2016 the team implemented three psycho-pedagogical group treatments as well as a psychotherapy group session just for women.

During its first year, the team has dealt with recurring questions concerning the treatment of unaccompanied minors and adolescents as well as adults with residence permits.

Changes to the Swedish Reception of Asylum Seekers Act (LMA) and the Aliens Act in the second half of 2016 have complicated the lives of the team's patients, worsening their psychosocial resilience, and leading to the addition of a welfare counselor to the team in order to meet these new needs.

Contact: Peter Hagman – Email: [peter.hagman@redcross.se](mailto:peter.hagman@redcross.se)



## Immigrant Coordinator at Dalslands Folkhögskola

The Folk high school has, for more than 150 years, been a unique form of education in Sweden. A school for adults, 18 and above, where the participants study on compulsory-, upper secondary or vocational levels. A folk high school is not to be compared with a university, it's rather something in between upper secondary school and university. In Sweden there are 154 folk high schools with around 30 000 participants. In Västra Götaland there are 21 folk high schools of which 6 are run by Region Västra Götaland (VGR). Dalslands Folkhögskola is one of these six.

Dalslands Folkhögskola educates Immigrant coordinators. The one-year course is new and under constant progress. One ambition is to change it into a two-year course in the very near future. Many of the participants just arrived in Sweden themselves and they need a lot of time to sufficiently master the Swedish language.

The course raises many issues of integration from a wide perspective. How can Society contribute to the integration of segregated cities? How can we increase a mutual respect for different cultures? Is it possible to develop from a multi-cultural society to an inter-cultural society where we create something new together? What can we do about the reasons that force people to escape?

Immigration Coordinators may, after the course, find different job opportunities. In schools, they can function as language assistants on different levels and in their native language. They can work in different homes for young new arrivals or in the reception of new arrivals to Sweden. In the society, they can also work with those immigrants who have received their residence permits. They could, finally, also find jobs in all parts of the civil society involved with an increased integration.

During your visit to Vänersborg on 9 February, you will meet teachers and participants from the Immigrant Coordinator course. You will also meet Anders Ahlström, director of the folk high school administration in Västra Götaland and Tomas Rydsmo, principal of Dalslands Folkhögskola.

Contact: Tomas Rydsmo, E-mail:tomas.rydsmo@vregion.se

<http://www.dals.fhsk.se/sv/kulturplattformen/fhsk-DALSLAND/Startsida/>

**DALSLANDS  
FOLKHÖGSKOLA**

## Useful definitions

- A migrant is any person who is residing in a country other than his country of citizenship or birth.
- An asylum seeker is a person seeking international protection who has applied but not yet been granted the status of "beneficiary of international protection".
- The term refugee is a person who is a successful asylum applicant.
- Subsidiary protection is given to a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee, but in respect of whom there are substantial grounds for believing that, if they were returned to their country of origin or, in the case of a stateless person, their country of former habitual residence, they would face a real risk of suffering serious harm.
- The term refugee is also often used as a more general term for a person who has been granted humanitarian, international or subsidiary protection.
- In Sweden we use the term newly arrived refugee for a person who have been granted humanitarian, international or subsidiary protection, and their families, during the time he or she is entitled to attend the introduction program. Normally two to three years after being granted resident permit.
- The term newly arrived refugee is for reasons of clarity sometimes used with a longer definition "Newly arrived refugees and other people in need of protection and their families".
- The term new arrivals are sometimes used as a synonym to newly arrived refugees.

# Program for the EIN study visit in Västra Götaland 8-9 February 2017

“Multi stakeholder approach for the integration of refugees”

Day 1 – Wednesday 8 February 2017	
08.00	Departure from the hotel with chartered bus At the hotel
08.30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Coffee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chalmerska Huset, Södra Hamngatan 11 <a href="http://www.chalmersskahuset.se">www.chalmersskahuset.se</a> Moderator: Ms Therese Ydrén, Region Västra Götaland +46 768090912</p>
08.40	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Mr Johnny Magnusson, President of the Regional Executive Board, Region Västra Götaland</p>
08.50	<p><b>European Integration Network</b></p> <p>Mr Antoine Savary, Deputy Head of Department Integration and Legal Migration, DG HOME</p>
09.00	<p><b>Introduction – the Swedish Integration System</b></p> <p>Mr Per Aldskogius, Head of Division for Integration, Ministry of Employment</p>
09.20	<p><b>Region Västra Götaland’s regional development initiatives aimed at asylum seekers and refugees</b></p> <p>Mr Anders Carlberg, Head of Department of Research, innovation and education, Region Västra Götaland</p>
09.40	<p><b>The County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland</b></p> <p>Ms Talieh Ashjari, Diversity Director, Unit for Social Sustainability</p>
10.00	<p><b>The Swedish Public Employment Service</b></p> <p>Mr Jonas Peterson Region North Västra Götaland</p>
10.30	<b>Coffee</b>
11.00	<p><b>The role of higher education for integration and inclusion: Some examples</b></p> <p>Ms Helena Lindholm, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Gothenburg</p>

11.20	<b>Recognition of skills and validation of prior learning and education</b> Mr Björn Hellsten, Manager, Validering Väst
11.40	<b>Region Västra Götaland – Health Care</b> <b>Health in Sweden for Asylum seekers and Newly arrived</b> Ms Lina Gustin, Project Manager, Group staff/Corporate Health care, Region Västra Götaland
12.00	<b>Questions and final remarks</b>
12.30	<b>Lunch</b>
13.30	<b>Departure to Andra Långgatan 19</b>
14.00	<b>Study visit at the Integration Centre, the City of Gothenburg</b> Mr Thomas Magnusson, Head of Unit, Integration Centre, Administration for allocation of social welfare
14.10	<b>Civic orientation</b> – visits in the class rooms and meeting the students
15.00	<b>Coffee</b>
15.15	<b>Introduction - Integration in the City of Gothenburg</b> Mr Jonas Attenius, Chair of the Committee for Adult Education and Labour Market, The City of Gothenburg
15.30	<b>Civic orientation course</b> Mr Thomas Magnusson, Head of Unit, Integration Centre, Administration for allocation of social welfare Ms Maria Ottosson, Assistant Head of Unit, Integration Centre, Administration for allocation of social welfare
16.05	<b>Swedish for immigrants</b> Mr Jan Elftorp, Director of the Adult Education and Labour market Authority, City of Gothenburg
16.30	<b>Departure</b> Stop at the hotel Elite Park Avenue at Kungssportsavenyn
18.30	<b>Universeum – Science Discovery Centre</b> Guided tour and presentation of the work with integration and diversity Mr Ulf Eriksson, Vice chairman of the Regional Development Committee, Region Västra Götaland Ms Carina Halvord, Director of Universeum Direction: Södra Vägen 50 (10 minutes' walk from the hotel)

19.30	<b>Dinner in the Aquarium Hall at Universeum</b>
	<b>Day 2 – 9 February 2017</b> <b>Study visit at Restad Gård</b>
07.45	<b>Departure to Vänersborg 1 hour drive</b> At the hotel
09.15	<b>Coffee and welcome introduction from the owner of Restad Gård</b> Mr Hans Kristian Voldstad
09.30	<b>Support Group Network Restad Gård/ Save the Children</b> Mr Adnan Abdul Ghani Initiator and member of Support Group Network
10.00	<b>The Swedish Migration Agency</b> Ms Linda Ottosson, Head of Section, Region West Sweden Mr Jonathan Kvist, Head of Unit, Reception Unit, Vänersborg
10.20	<b>Vänersborg Municipality</b> Ms Marie Dahlin, President of the Council of Vänersborg
10.40	<b>University West</b> Mr Jan Theliander, Pro-Vice Chancellor
11.00	<b>Red cross – Mobile Trauma Centre for traumatized and tortured refugees</b> Mr Peter Hagman
11.30	<b>Dalslands Folk High School- Integration Coordinators</b> Mr Anders Ahlström, Executive Director, Folk High Schools, Region Västra Götaland Mr Tomas Rydsmo, Principal of Dalslands Folk High School
12.00	Walk 200 m to the restaurant
12.15	<b>Lunch together with the Integration Coordinators students at Restaurant Villa Hehrnes Restad gård</b>
13.00	<b>Visiting of the Support group Network ongoing activities at Restad Gård</b> The visiting tour is guided by students from Dalsland Folk High School and Support group
14.30	Chartered bus <b>Departure directly to Landvetter Airport (1h 25 min)</b>

Questions? Please contact Ms Therese Ydrén, Region Västra Götaland  
Phone:+46 768 09 09 12 Email: [therese.ydren@vgregion.se](mailto:therese.ydren@vgregion.se)