

# Nature-based integration

NORDIC EXPERIENCES AND EXAMPLES





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*Kati Pitkänen, Joose Oratuomi, Daniela Hellgren, Eeva Furman, Sandra Gentin, Eva Sandberg, Hogne Øian and Olve Krange*

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ISBN 978-92-893-4923-9 (PRINT)

ISBN 978-92-893-4924-6 (PDF)

ISBN 978-92-893-4925-3 (EPUB)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/TN2017-517>

TemaNord 2017:517

ISSN 0908-6692

Standard: PDF/UA-1

ISO 14289-1

© Nordic Council of Ministers 2017

Layout: NMR

Cover photo: unsplash.com

Print: Rosendahls

Printed in Denmark



Although the Nordic Council of Ministers funded this publication, the contents do not necessarily reflect its views, policies or recommendations.

## Nordic co-operation

*Nordic co-operation* is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

*Nordic co-operation* has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

*Nordic co-operation* seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

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# Summary

Immigration and the integration of migrants into the Nordic societies have become hot topics due to, not the least, the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees to Europe. The Nordic countries have accepted far more refugees than most European countries on a per capita basis. Also the more long-term immigration trends show that Nordic countries are becoming more and more multicultural with people moving in from further away than ever before. These developments raise great opportunities to tackle problems related to demographic trends in Nordic countries but they also raise many challenges. Increased attention to, and careful planning of the integration of migrants into Nordic societies has been proposed as the key solution to these challenges.

Nature-based solutions may have the potential of offering an efficient and cost-effective way for better integration of the immigrants. One of the key characteristics across all Nordic societies is a lifestyle which highly values active outdoor recreation and living close to nature – even in urban areas. Nordic countries share a similar public right of access to natural areas, foraging traditions and appreciation of natural and rural landscapes and pastoral traditions. Moreover, there is an increasing evidence on the positive benefits of natural and rural landscapes for human health and social, psychological and physical well-being.

Terrestrial Ecosystem Group (TEG) of the Nordic Council of Ministers funded the pre-project ORIGIN in 2016 in order to increase the understanding of the role of nature and cultural ecosystem services in the social integration of immigrants into the Nordic societies. The project was designed to launch Nordic cooperation within “nature based integration”, a field that has until recently remained relatively unexplored. The project brought together researchers, NGOs and public and private actors interested in nature-based integration of immigrants, conducted a survey in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark (N=129) and arranged a workshop in Helsinki with 27 participants.

This report presents the results of the survey and workshop as well as illustrates the current practices of nature-based integration by presenting eight case descriptions from different Nordic countries. The report concludes that interest in nature-based integration is expanding rapidly and experiences on it have been positive. Across the

Nordic countries a number of practical projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration. There is also increasing academic interest in immigrants' and multicultural encounters with nature in several fields. Nordic countries have the potential of becoming real forerunners in nature-based integration even at the global scale

However, the information and experiences gathered in the current initiatives and projects have remained very fragmented, not transferred across Nordic borders or even nationally. Moreover, the academic knowledge is not effectively applied by the NGOs or public and private actors. One of the reasons for the fragmentation of nature-based integration is the lack of clarity of the concepts applied. At the moment, it is unclear what exactly is meant by nature-based integration, what should its' goals be and whether it should be understood as the means to an end or the end itself.

The report ends with several recommendations including finding common definitions and concepts, better integrating the immigrant perspective into development of the practices, identification of best-practices and evaluating their potential for upscaling across borders, setting up a Nordic platform for knowledge exchange and better integration of nature-based integration in the official integration policies and integration work at the public sector.



# 1. Introduction

Immigration and the integration of migrants into the Nordic societies have become hot topics due to, not the least, the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees to Europe. The Nordic countries have accepted far more refugees than most European countries on a per capita basis. Also the more long-term immigration trends show that Nordic countries are becoming more and more multicultural with people moving in from further away than ever before. These developments raise great opportunities to tackle problems related to demographic trends in Nordic countries but they also raise many challenges. Increased attention to, and careful planning of the integration of migrants into Nordic societies has been proposed as the key solution to these challenges.

This report presents the results of the pre-project ORIGIN (Outdoor recreation, nature interpretation and integration in Nordic countries) funded by TEG/NCM. The project aimed at increasing the understanding of the role of nature and cultural ecosystem services in the social integration of immigrants foreign migrants into the Nordic societies.<sup>1</sup> The project was designed in order to launch Nordic cooperation in a field that has thus far remained relatively unexplored. Across the Nordic countries a number of practical projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration, but information and experiences gathered in these have remained very fragmented. There is a need for Nordic cooperation in which to share current knowledge and experiences as well as to develop joint solutions and practices.

The project started from the notion that one of the key characteristics across all Nordic societies is a lifestyle which highly values active outdoor recreation and living close to nature – even in urban areas. We have traditionally had a very distinctive human-nature relationship characterised by, for instance, the public right of access (everyman's rights) to natural areas, foraging traditions and appreciation of natural and rural landscapes and pastoral traditions. Although Nordic people's everyday lives are

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<sup>1</sup> The term immigrant is here used to refer to foreign migrants and refugees. The emphasis in the report is especially on immigrants of non-western background.

also increasingly diverged from nature, the role of nature for Nordic cultural identity is still very strong.

Many studies have found positive benefits of natural and rural landscapes for human health and well-being. Outdoor life and being “exposed” to nature can contribute positively to the physical, mental and social well-being (e.g. Puhakka, Pitkänen & Siikamäki 2016). Contact with nature alleviates stress, lowers blood pressure, enhances human immune system and activates people to move. It enhances concentration, restoration and has the potential to cure mental wounds and to help people to become a whole person. Nature-based activities can promote people’s mutual interaction and their sense of community.

However, factors such as age, gender, economic status, upbringing in rural or urban settings and current living environment as well as ethnic origin contribute to people’s practices in, and possibilities to, engage with nature and in the ways landscapes are perceived and interpreted. Studies show that nature and outdoor recreation can promote immigrants’ psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Immigrants do appreciate and use nature in many ways, sometimes also in ways which are not traditionally Nordic. In the middle of a foreign culture nature and green spaces can provide comfort, safety, a place to get together, and a platform for meaningful activities and intercultural communication and cooperation (see Faehnle *et al.* 2010; Stodolska, Peters & Horolets 2016; Gentin 2015; 2011). On the other hand, there is also evidence that immigrants’ and refugees’ experience of Nordic natural and cultural landscapes is not self-evidently positive; nature may be experienced e.g. frightening, incomprehensible or non-accessible. Changing of seasons and winter conditions, unfamiliar landscapes and animals, poor accessibility, not knowing what is allowed, cultural traditions, social norms, fear of racism and lack of support may become obstacles for outdoor recreation. Nonetheless, a connection to nature can be a channel to Nordic culture and language with using the entire palette of senses.

To pave the way for Nordic cooperation and knowledge exchange in nature-based integration ORIGIN project set out to explore current experiences, key actors, barriers and opportunities in four different Nordic countries. The project team brought together representatives of research organisations, NGOs and public sector from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The team jointly designed and carried out an online survey in these four countries. In addition, a Nordic workshop was organised in Helsinki with several presentations from each of the participating countries. This report summarises the results of the project. The survey results are presented in chapter 4. Chapter 5 sums up the results

of the workshop and the participants' feedback. To deepen the understanding of practices of nature-based integration chapter 6 is devoted to examples of current practices written by project partners from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The report ends in conclusions and recommendations for future research and development.



## 2. Survey results

### 2.1 Introduction to the survey

To get an overview of the state of the art of nature-based integration practices and knowledge as well as to facilitate networking a simultaneous online survey was conducted in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark from July to November in 2016. The survey was targeted at public, private and third sector organisations working with (nature-based) integration of immigrants and it was distributed openly through social media, mailing lists and direct emails. The recipients were asked to forward the questionnaire to suitable respondents and suggest people to whom the survey link could be emailed to. The data collection method, thus, resembled the snowballing technique. However, data collection differed between the countries resulting in an uneven distribution of the responses. In most of the countries the answers came primarily from organisations and people already involved in nature-based integration (Sweden, Denmark, Norway) whereas especially in Finland the survey link was distributed more broadly and the survey was answered also by people and organisations who did not have prior experience on nature-based activities for immigrants. Therefore the results do not allow for generalisations or comparisons between countries.

The survey was published in three different languages: Swedish, English and Finnish. It included 17 questions that were grouped under the following themes: 1) current experiences and practices, 2) opportunities and barriers, 3) knowledge and collaboration needs. Both structured and open-ended questions were used. In this chapter the results of the survey questions are summarised. The structured questions are reported using basic frequencies and percentages as well as mean values. The open-ended questions have been analysed using thematic analysis and inducing thematic categories from the data. Direct citations from the responses in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish and English will be used to illustrate the analysis. The questionnaire in its full length can be found in appendix 1.

From the 6th of July to the 8th of November 2016, 129 answered the questionnaire. Distribution of the responses per country was following: over half of the responses (54%) came from Finland, 19% from Sweden, 17% from Norway and 10% from Denmark (see Figure 1). Two thirds of the respondents answered the survey as a representative of an organisation. One fifth answered as a private person and one tenth as an expert or researcher (see Figure 2). Out of those representing an organisation almost half belonged to the third sector i.e. the various non-governmental and non-profit organisations, over one third to the public sector and 16% to the private sector.

Figure 1: Survey respondents by country (N=125)

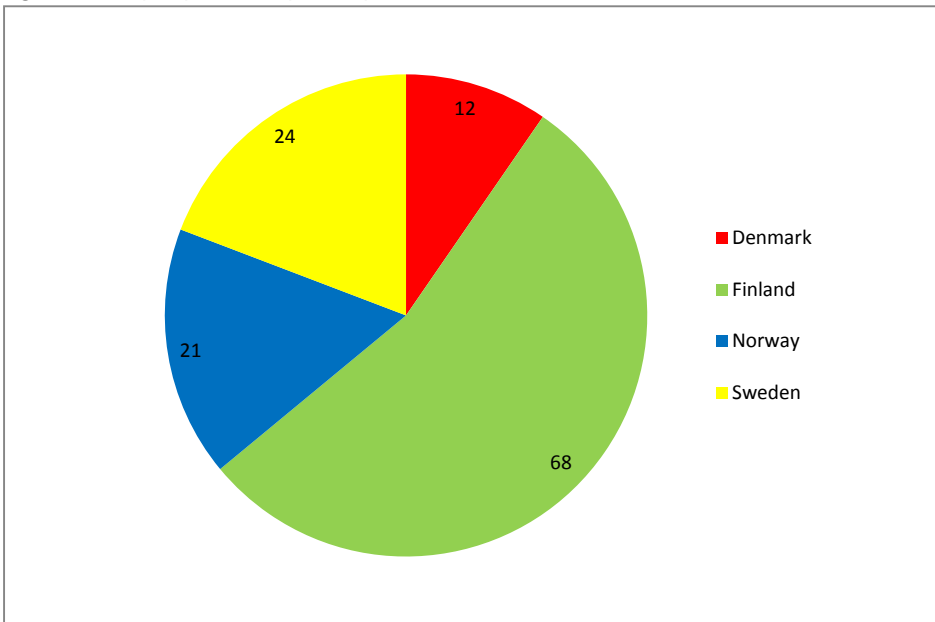
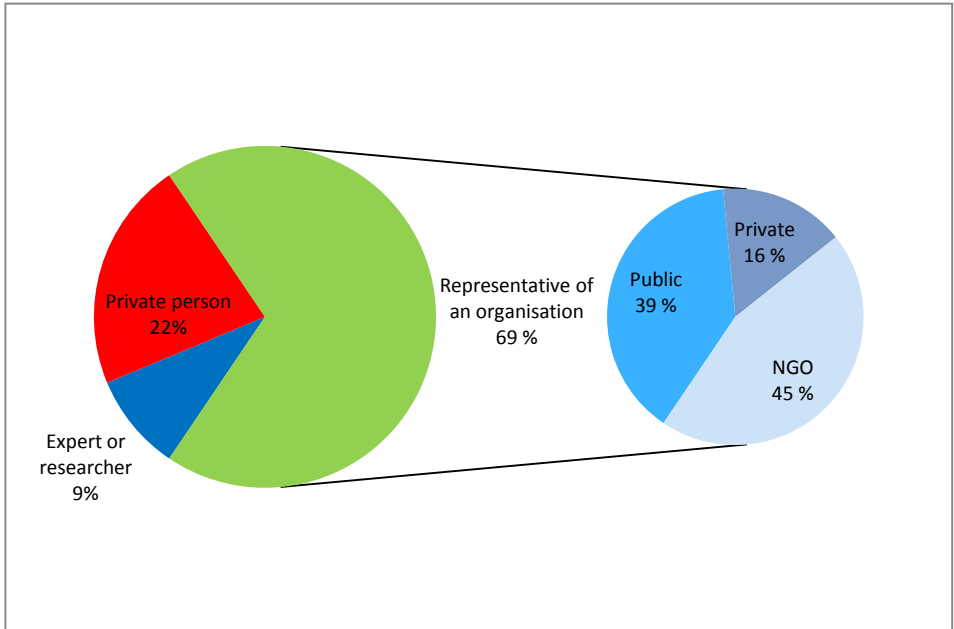


Figure 2: Type of respondents and their organisations (N=119)



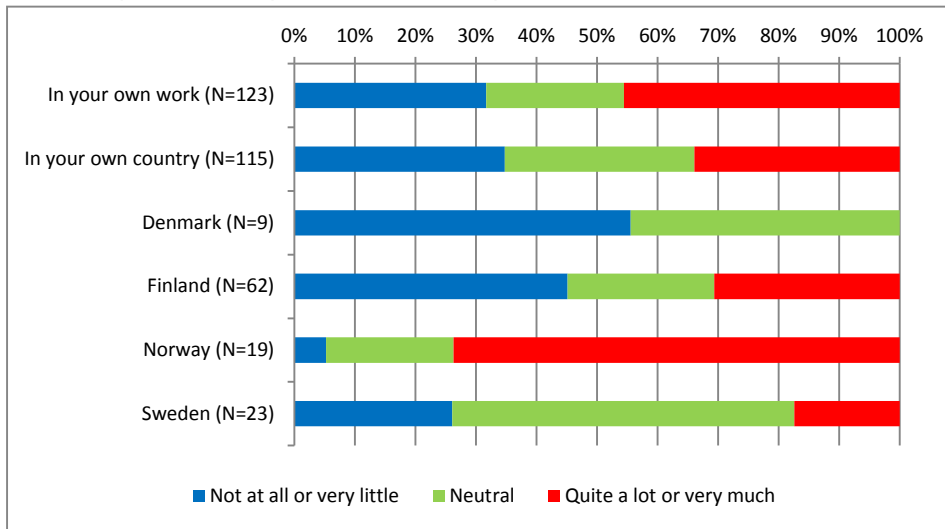
## 2.2 First theme of questionnaire: Previous experiences and practices

To frame a picture of the current state of the art in the field of nature based integration in the Nordic countries, the first questionnaire theme focused on the respondents own experiences with nature-based practices in integration work. We asked about the respondents' commitment to nature-based practices in their own work and who they consider as key actors in their countries. The respondents were asked to mention examples and give references of ongoing or finished activities they were aware of.

Nearly half of all the respondents stated that they use nature and outdoor recreation in integration processes in their own work quite a lot or very much. The results were similar also when the respondents were asked to estimate how common nature-based practices were in their own country (see Figure 3). When compared between countries, the use of nature-based practices was the most familiar to the Norwegian respondents,

but since the data collection methods as well as the respondent numbers between countries differed significantly country comparisons must be approached cautiously. What the results show, however, is that there is still room for more effective use of nature-based integration methods. Although the survey favoured respondents who already had experience of nature-based methods, over one third of the respondents used them very little or not at all.

**Figure 3: To what extent are nature and outdoor recreation used in integration processes in your own work and in your own country? Combined and country-wise results**



Note: Results from Denmark, Sweden and Norway are based on very few respondents.

When asked about the *key players* in nature-based integration, the respondents identified a broad range of actors from the whole society in different levels and sectors. In the public sector especially the educational institutes, school system, nurseries and day cares were identified to play an important role in introducing nature-based activities to immigrants. Regional governments and municipalities were also mentioned to play a role in the general integration work as well as the nature-based work. In addition, the various NGOs already operating in the fields of social matters, nature and outdoor recreation were seen as potential key players in organising nature-based integration activities.

In the respondents' opinion, also the actors in the private sector, small and medium sized enterprises, private persons and communities can have a significant contribution



to nature based integration efforts. All in all, nature was seen as untapped potential and its role could be improved in whole of society across the Nordic countries. According to the respondents' answers there is a broad range of potential actors in nature-based integration some of which may not be aware of that what they are doing could be categorized as nature-based integration. Therefore, as one of the respondents pointed out the risk is that the current activities remain random if there is no further development or systematic review of the lessons learned from these experiences.

It's difficult to say. In my opinion nature is overall relatively weakly present in the integration of immigrants, although nature is an important part of Finnish culture and identity and also reflects on the Finnish language. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Vaikea sanoa. Mielestäni tämä luontopuoli on ylipäätään melko heikosti esillä maahanmuuttajien kotoutumisessa, vaikka luonto on merkittävä osa suomalaista kulttuuria ja identiteettiä sekä heijastuu myös suomen kieleen.)*

It is not known to us that such key players exist. Lots of organisations receive funding for this kind of work, but seem to have problems recruiting people with minority background or lack the will to integrate them into their structures except from isolated stunts and activities with no further plan.

Many projects take advantage of the well-being benefits of nature by arranging forests trips, nature activities, but the actors do not perceive them as nature-based integration, but basic project activities. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Monissa hankkeissa hyödynnetään luonnon hyvinvointivaikutuksia; tehdään metsäretkiä, toimitaan luonnossa, mutta toimija ei miellä tekevänsä luontokotouttamista vaan perustoimintaa.)*

Although the respondents stated, that there was an untapped potential regarding nature and integration, the respondents provided a lot of examples of the current practices. One respondent even concluded that there are too many examples to list in a survey.

We run a project of introduction to nature and friluftsliv as a natural part of the introduction program of newly arrived immigrants. The adult and children classes focus mainly on learning Norwegian language and society. Our project aims to combine introduction to outdoor activities related to the Norwegian environment and season, with learning language through cooperation, communication and hands-on experiences. We focus on giving positive experiences of being outdoors and open knowledge of accessibility, possibilities and rights to explore nature areas. We hope that the participants will catch interest of the activities, feel included and welcome to local friluftsliv.

We have arranged nature and outdoor activities for children with Arabic and Somali backgrounds, for unaccompanied refugee minors, for families and adult immigrants. We have also arranged inspiration days in outdoor education for 120 teachers of SFI (Swedish for immigrants) and social introduction. We have also had an event ("diversity evening") where our leaders had the opportunity to meet and discuss nature and outdoor recreation based integration with people from different immigrant associations. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Vi har haft natur- och friluftaktiviteter för barn med arabisk och somalisk bakgrund, för ensamkommande ungdomar, för familjer samt för vuxna invandrare. Dessutom har vi ordnat inspirationsdagar i utomhuspedagogik för 120 lärare inom SFI och samhällsintroduktion. Vi har även haft en mångfaldskväll där våra ledare fick möjlighet att träffa och diskutera natur- och friluftintegration med personer från olika invandrarföreningar.)*

From my experience, nature-based methods have not been systematically used and it has not been explored if such methods meet the needs of the target group. Many NGOs are very excited about nature-based methods, but I would estimate that it may be more challenging to get the target group interested. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Luontolähtöisiä menetelmiä ei minun kokemuksen mukaan ole hyödynnetty kovin systemaattisesti tai ylipäättään selvitetty palvelevatko ne kohderyhmän tarpeita. Monet järjestötoimijat ovat hyvin innostuneita luontolähtöisistä menetelmistä, mutta arvioni on että kohderyhmän innostaminen on ehkä haastavampi tehtävä.)*

The most frequent types of activities mentioned were the different kinds of organised and guided trips and nature-based activities provided for immigrants. The immigrants are currently being introduced to a variety of Nordic outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, disc golf and kayaking (see Table 1 for a complete list of activities mentioned in the survey responses). The educational aspect was also mentioned often. The everyman's rights and related regulations and responsibilities are taught to immigrants and they are instructed on which are the edible berries and mushrooms that can be gathered from the nature. Immigrants have also been invited to take part in various voluntary nature projects such as building birdhouses and recreational facilities. The duration of guided activities, trips and events mentioned by the respondents varied from few hours to one day events and even longer summer camps.

**Table 1: Outdoor and nature activities used in integration work**

Outdoor and nature activities used in integration work		
Berry, mushroom & herb picking.	Forestry.	Nature education.
Biking.	Frisbee/disc golf.	Orienteering.
Birdwatching.	Games and playing.	Photographing.
Camping.	Gardening & farming Horse riding.	Rowing.
Canoeing & kayaking.	Hunting.	Sailing.
Climbing.	Kite building and flying.	Skiing.
Cooking outdoors.	Mountaineering.	Snow sliding.
Fishing, ice fishing.		Swimming.

Some of the respondents also told about vocational education and courses for immigrants in forestry and agricultural work, aiming at more long term benefits through internships and professions related to nature. Community gardens and allotment gardens for immigrants were referred to as meaningful activities for the people participating as well as providing a way for a small scale food production.

Some of the examples given refer to a more systematic approach to nature-based integration as a method for immigration work. The respondents told about seminars and courses directed to teachers and other professionals working with immigrants concerning the possibilities of nature-based solutions in integration work. Especially the benefits of nature to the mental and physical well-being were highlighted. The advantages of learning the new language in natural surroundings during other activities, was also brought up in the answers. Finally, the respondents listed a number of research and project reports, guidebooks, theses and other publications related to the theme.

### 2.3 Second theme: Opportunities and barriers

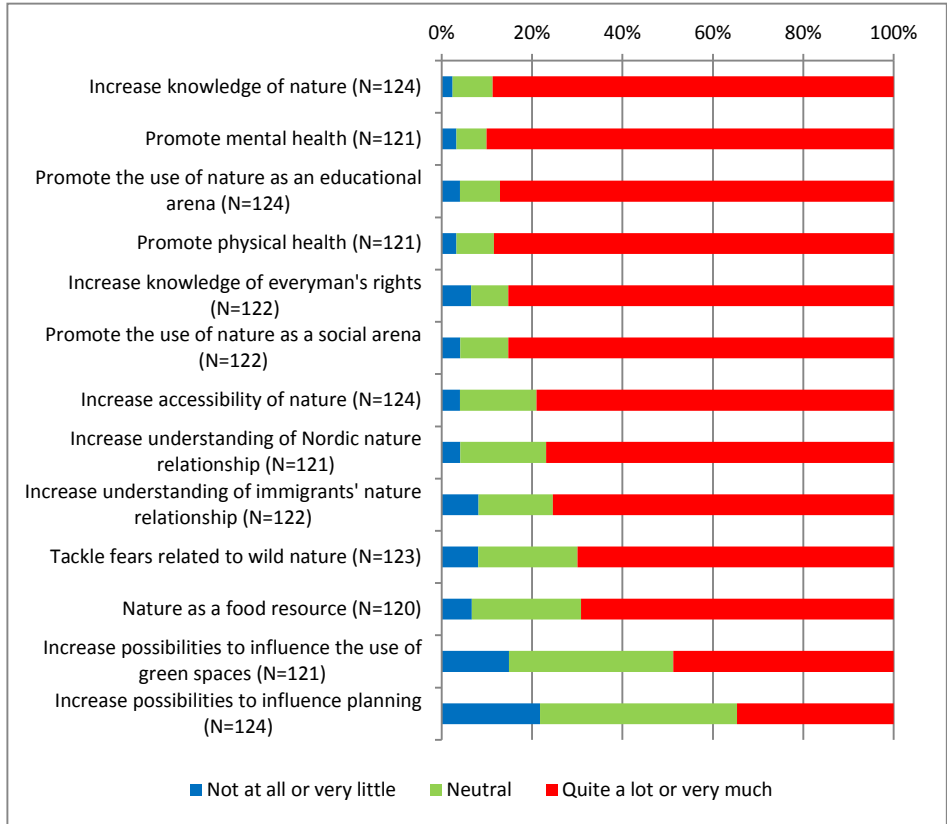
The second section of the survey assessed the opinions of the respondents about the potential and opportunities offered by nature-based integration for the integration of immigrants to the Nordic countries. We asked what aspects of nature-based integration should be emphasised and whether the different aspects should be the responsibility of the public, private or third sector actors. Further, we were interested in the respondents' views of the potential target groups for nature-based integration. In order to locate the possible bottlenecks, a set of barriers on individual as well as

organizational level were given for the respondents to evaluate. Lastly, we asked the respondents to evaluate on the importance of the nature-based integration among other integration work now and in the future and motivate their answer.

The four most important aspects of nature-based integration according to the respondents were increasing immigrants' knowledge of the recreational opportunities of natural and cultural landscapes and green areas, increasing knowledge and the use of nature in promoting immigrants' mental and physical health as well as promoting the use of nature as an educational arena (see Figure 4). In line with strong Nordic traditions over 80% of the respondents considered that increasing the knowledge of public right of access (everyman's rights) and promotion of the use of nature as a meeting place and arena for social interaction should be emphasized quite or very much. The two aspects that were least often considered worth of emphasizing were increasing immigrants' possibilities to influence the use and planning of natural and cultural landscapes and green spaces.

Many respondents suggested also other themes outside the structured survey options. These included increasing the immigrants' knowledge of the importance of nature protection, recycling and sustainable use of natural resources, thus, enhancing their environmental awareness. Several of the respondents also suggested that the emphasis should be on promoting the employment and sustenance opportunities provided by nature as well as in the fields of natural resources and environment. Few of the respondents wanted more emphasis on teaching the immigrants and enhancing their capacity to take part in certain nature activities (e.g. swimming).

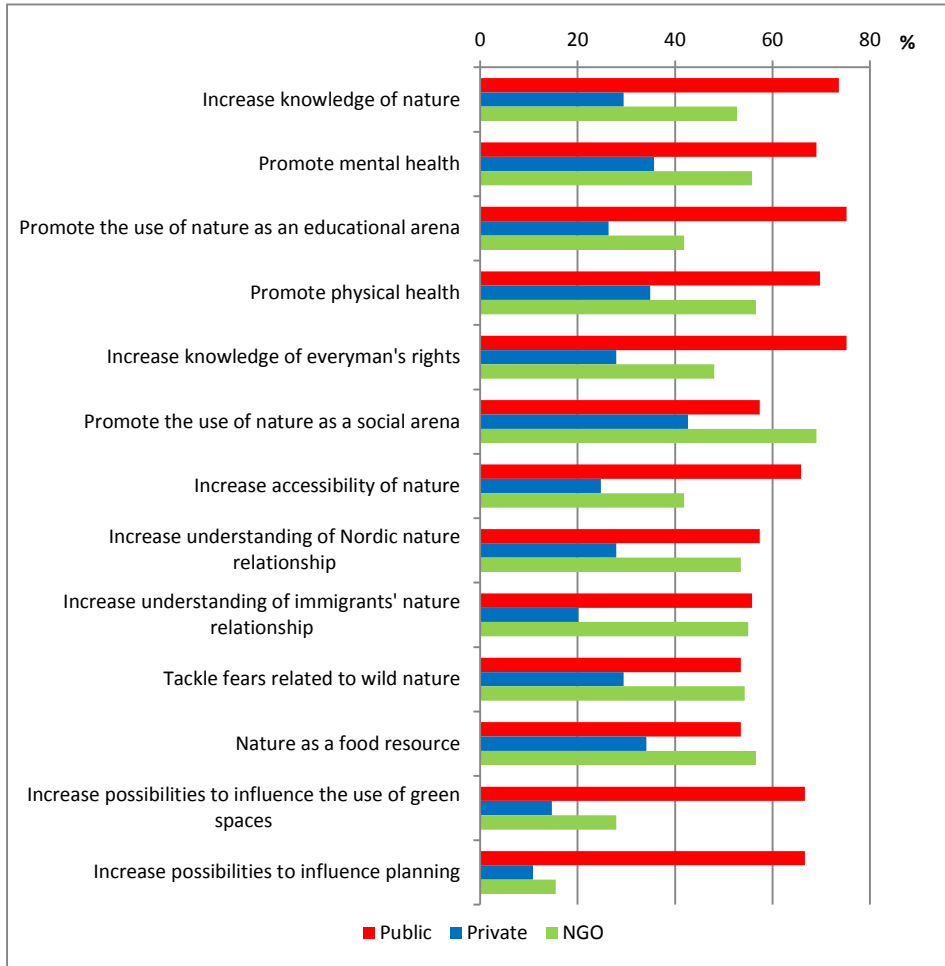
**Figure 4: To what extent the following aspects of nature-based integration should be emphasized?**



The respondents saw these different aspects of nature based integration predominantly as the responsibility of the public and third sector. None of the aspects was mainly seen as a responsibility of the private sector (see Figure 5). Over 60% of the respondents agreed that especially increasing the immigrants' knowledge of nature and everyman's rights, use of nature as an educational arena, promoting immigrants' mental and physical health, increasing accessibility of nature for immigrants as well as increasing their possibilities to influence the use and planning of natural areas should be the responsibility of the public sector. Promoting social interaction, increasing understanding of human-nature relationship, tackling the possible fears related to wild nature and promoting the use of nature as a food resource were seen equally as the duty of the public and the third sector.

The private sector was seen to have a stake especially in promoting the use of nature as a meeting place and arena for social interaction.

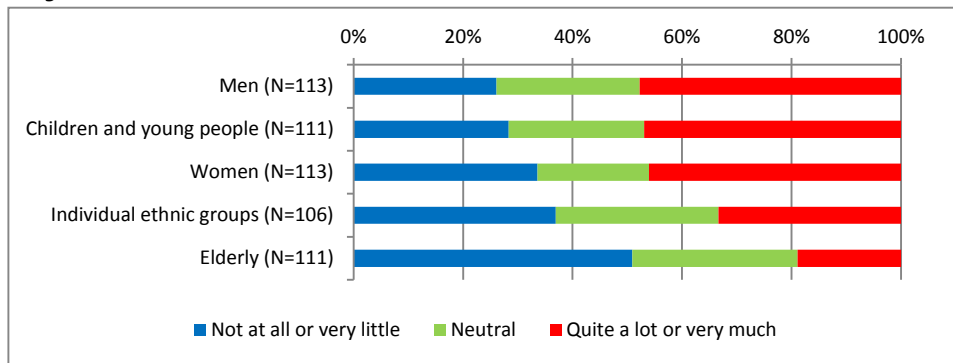
Figure 5: Evaluate whose responsibility each of the aspects of nature-based integration should be (N=129)



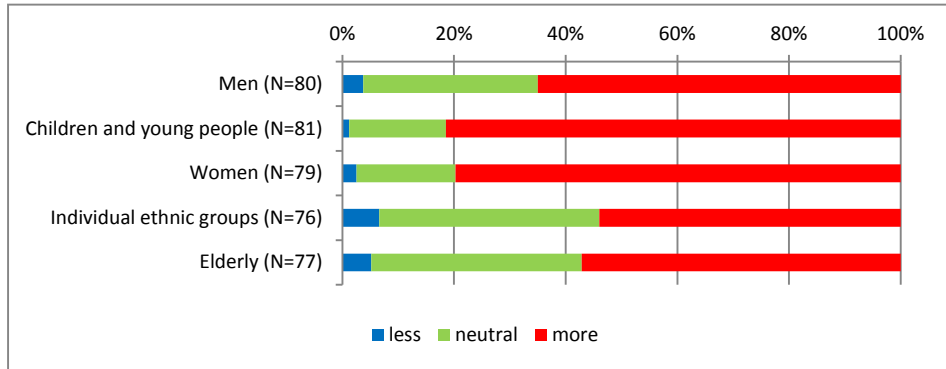
Note: It was possible to choose more than option.

Respondents were asked to what extent they work with different groups' specific needs in relation to nature based integration at the moment and how they think the focus should develop in the future considering these groups. Drawing from the answers, at the moment nature based integration work is done mostly among men, children and young people and little less among women (see Figure 6). Less attention is given to the needs of the individual ethnic groups and the elderly. Respondents felt that in the future more focus should be directed to working with women while keeping the priority also on children and young people (see Figure 7). Other groups identified as possible target groups for nature-based integration included the urbanized citizens and residents of the Nordic countries, students, families, mixed groups of natives and immigrants, asylum seekers, official minority groups, as well as professionals, experts and organisations working with integration.

**Figure 6: To what extent do you work with the following groups' specific needs in nature-based integration?**



**Figure 7: In your opinion, should the focus be more or less on these groups in the future?**

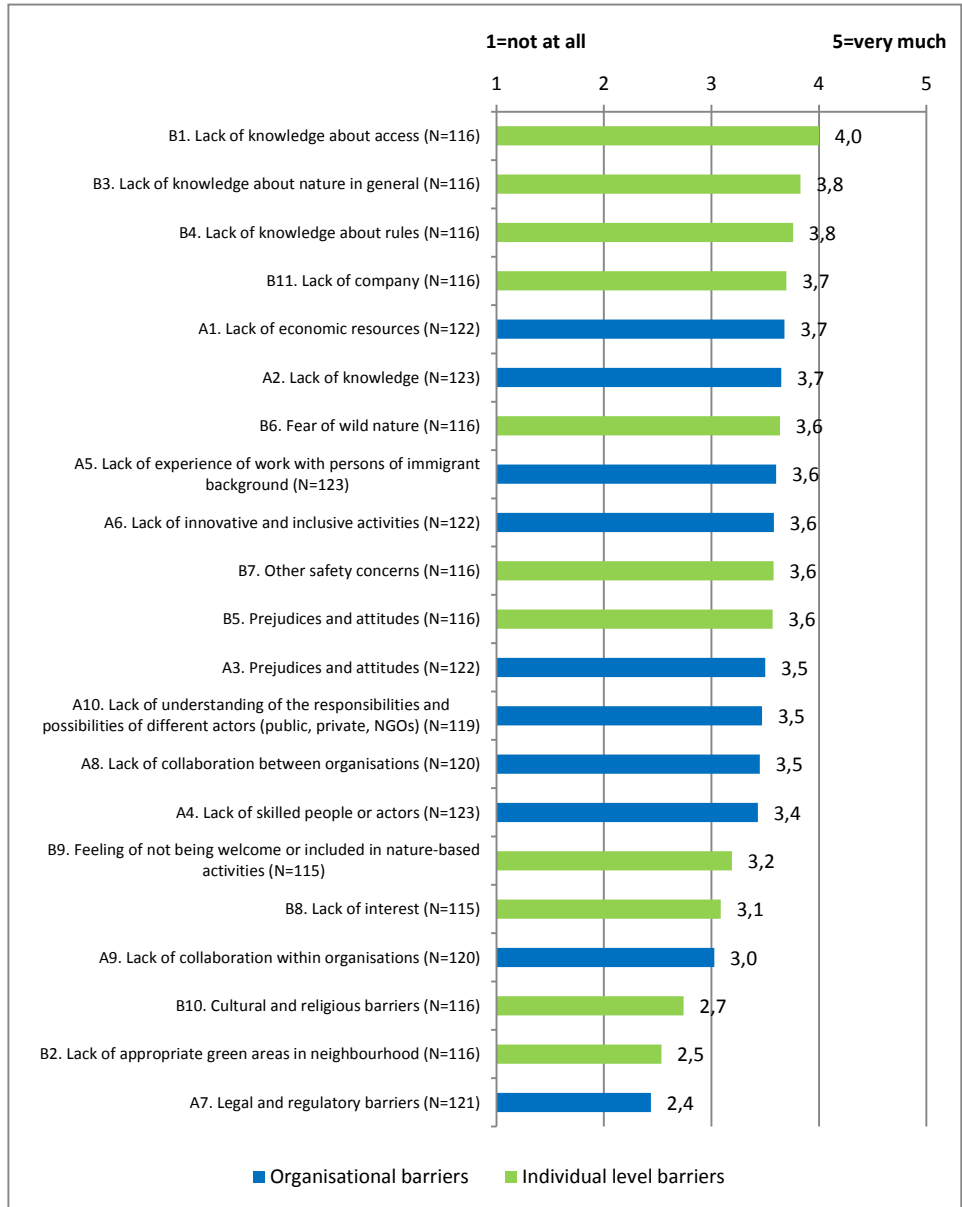


To get to know the obstacles of nature-based integration, respondents were asked to assess the importance of a range of organisational and individual level barriers (see Figure 8). The biggest barriers were found to be related to the perceptions, knowledge, possibilities and lives of the individuals with immigrant background. These included the insufficient knowledge of access, rules and of nature in general as well as lack of company for nature-based activities. The respondents evaluated that the most important organisational level barriers, in turn, were lack of sufficient economic resources and lack of knowledge of nature-based integration in organisations. Only three of the barriers were evaluated to be of very little or not at all important (mean value below 3). It is noticeable that the respondents felt that the cultural and religious barriers do not constitute a significant obstacle to the use of nature based integration. Similarly, they felt that neither does the lack of appropriate green areas nor legal and regulatory barriers hinder the use of nature in integration work.

Additional barriers suggested by the respondents included at the organizational level the lack of knowledge of the best practices in nature-based integration as well as the general underrating of the potential of nature-based methods. At the individual level, the respondents mentioned especially the immigrants’ lack of appropriate clothes, gear and sports equipment as well as their lack of previous positive experiences that would encourage outdoor life.

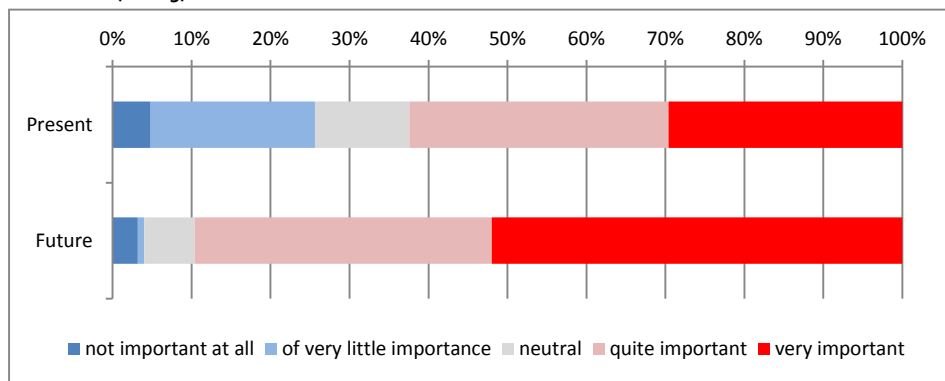


Figure 8: Based on your own experiences, please assess how important the following barriers are for nature-based integration at present. Mean values (1=not at all .... 5=very much)



When asked about the importance of nature-based integration among other integration work, almost two thirds of the respondents answered that nature-based integration is already important, and almost 90% stated that nature based integration will be important in the future (see Figure 9). However, when interpreting this result it has to be bear in mind that the respondents mainly consisted of people who are already familiar and working with nature-based integration.

**Figure 9: How important is nature-based integration among other integration work at present and in the future? (N=125)**



The respondents were asked to elaborate the importance of nature-based integration in an open-ended question. The following five themes summarise broadly the key themes emerging from the answers. The themes are illustrated with citations from the survey responses.

1) “Surviving” in the North: Many respondents commented that in order to integrate in the Nordic countries it is important that the immigrants learn how to cope with, appreciate and protect nature. Learning the rules, regulations and traditions will also help to avoid conflicts.

The immigrants must, as soon as possible, get a feeling and understanding of rules that apply in our nature. Both the rights and the responsibilities. So that good habits become norms from the beginning. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

(Original: Invandrare måste så snabbt som möjligt få en känsla och förståelse för vad som gäller i vår natur. Både rättigheter och skyldigheter. Så att goda vanor blir normen från början.)

Many immigrants are frightened by the Finnish nature when they arrive to the country. Everyman’s rights should be taught, but also how to respect people’s privacy and not to go too near private

dwellings. I think that it is more common among immigrants to litter in nature. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Monia maahanmuuttajia pelottaa suomalainen luonto heidän tullessaan maahan. Jokamiehenoiseudet on hyvä käydä läpi, mutta myös tietty yksityisyyden kunnioittaminen, ettei liian lähelle yksityisasumuksia saa mennä. Roskien heittäily luontoon on mielestäni maahanmuuttajilla yleisempää.)*

2) Nature as a key to the Nordic society and culture: the respondents saw nature as a key to the deeper understanding of the Nordic society, culture and the people. It was stated that nature is an important resource and there are also plenty of job opportunities related to nature. Integrating to the surrounding environment was seen as important as (and a part of) the cultural integration.

When immigrants gain knowledge on how important nature is for Nordic people and the traditions associated with nature their respect and understanding of the country and people living in it grows. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Då en invandrare får kunskap om hur viktig naturen är för nordborna och de traditioner som är förknippade med naturen så ökar också respekten och förståelsen för landet och människorna som bor där.)*

Contact with nature is extremely important for Norwegians, and for all who intend to live in the country for a longer period of time. Outdoor activities are an important part of Norwegian culture and an important arena for common experiences. Common experiences enable stronger integration between different groups. (Quotation in Norwegian, translation by authors)

*(Original: Kontakt med natur betyr svært mye for nordmenn, og for alle som skal oppholde seg i landet over lengre tid. Friluftsliv er en viktig del av norsk kultur og en viktig felles erfaringsarena. Felles opplevelser gir sterkere integrasjon mellom ulike grupper.)*

3) Health and well-being benefits of nature: many respondents emphasized the positive impacts of nature on the immigrants' wellbeing. Especially the benefit on mental well-being was seen as a major contributor in tackling the stress and traumas of the often dramatic backgrounds and histories of the newcomers.

Very important, especially for people who have had traumatic experiences in their home country or during the escape (in DK 30-50%), because nature also can help people with mental problems and when such problems decrease, the possibilities for integration increases (e.g. easier to learn a new language, etc.). (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Mycket viktig, speciellt för de personer som har traumatiska upplevelser från hemlandet*

eller flykten (i DK 30–50%), då naturen också kan hjälpa personer med mentala problem och då de problemen blir mindre, är möjligheten för integration större (bl.a. lättare inläring av nytt språk osv).

Nature can be significant for mental health and physical condition. Natural environments have been found to help with the recovery from traumatic experiences. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

(*Original*: Luonnolla voi olla tärkeä merkitys mielenterveyden ja fyysisen kunnon kannalta. Luonnonympäristön on todettu auttavan traumaattisista kokemuksista toipumisessa.)

4) Nature as an untapped potential: the respondents pointed out that the possibilities of nature are not yet taken advantage of in a sufficient degree, not in the societal level nor in integration work.

We focus much on language and society. Nature is a resource that could be used more. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

(*Original*: Vi fokuserar mycket på språk och samhälle. Naturen är en resurs vi kunde använda mer.)

At the moment nature-based integration is very randomly used and based on individual events. In my opinion, in the future nature-based integration should be a more systematical part of integration activities. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

(*Original*: Tällä hetkellä luontokotoutuminen on hyvin satunnaista ja yksittäisiin tapahtumiin perustuvaa. Näkisin, että tulevaisuudessa luontokotoutumisen tulisi olla systemaattisemmin osa kotoutumistoimintaa.)

5) Nature as a social arena: many respondents saw nature as an effective way and arena for social interaction between immigrants and Nordic people. Nature-based activities and hobbies bring people together and taking part in these can help immigrants to build relationships and friendships with the non-immigrant groups.

Being active in nature could also connect native Finns and immigrants, by bringing people together through e.g. common hobbies. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

(*Original*: Luonnossa toimiminen voi myös olla yhdistävä tekijä kantasuomalaisten ja maahanmuuttajien välillä, joka voi tuoda ihmisiä yhteen esimerkiksi yhteisen harrastuksen myötä.)

We know based on a lot of research that nature has a positive impact on both learning and physical wellbeing. Nature based integration facilitates also social integration, it often seems that people find it easier to relax and be spontaneous in outdoor environments (in my experience). Being familiar with the nature in which you live and what you can do and what you cannot do there is a great part of feeling at home, in my opinion. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Man vet genom massor av forskning att naturen har positiva effekter på både inlärning och fysiskt välmående. Genom naturbaserad integration blir det också en social integration, ofta verkar människor ha lättare att slappna av och vara spontana i utemiljöer (min erfarenhet). Att känna till den natur man lever i och veta vad man får o inte får göra är en stor del i att känna sig hemma tror jag.)*

## 2.4 Third theme: Knowledge needs and collaboration

The aim of the third questionnaire section was to get an overview of the knowledge and information needs of the respondents working with immigrants and nature-based integration as well as their opinions for future cross-border collaboration.

The respondents listed a range of different knowledge needs which were categorized under 5 main themes.

1) The most common knowledge need listed by the respondents was the need to better understand the immigrant perspective. The respondents emphasized that in order for the nature-based methods to work and be effective, we need to listen to the needs, wishes and fears of the immigrants themselves and try to reach them through media and communication channels that they use. Different concepts of nature emerge from different cultural backgrounds and the immigrants do not necessarily share the human-nature relationship common in Nordic countries. When planning nature-based activities and methods, the importance of understanding of both the personal and societal backgrounds of the immigrants cannot be overemphasised.

What kind of activities appeal to immigrants? What is needed to get them involved? More knowledge about the cultural limitations - what can women do? But the goal must be that immigrants are integrated into Norwegian / Nordic culture – we have to advance integration through outdoor recreation - not reinforce and continue the cultural differences that are not desirable. (Quotation in Norwegian, translation by authors).

*(Original: Hvilken type aktiviteter appellerer til innvandrere? Hva skal til for at de blir med? Mer kunnskap om kulturelle begrensninger, - hva kan kvinner gjøre? Men målet må være at innvandrere integreres i norsk/nordisk kultur, - gjennom friluftslivet må vi foreta integrering, - ikke forsterke og videreføre kulturforskjeller som ikke er ønskelige.)*

2) Secondly, the respondents emphasised that more information of the different organisations organising nature-based activities for immigrants and the range of different activities and practices already available across different countries. There is a need for a comprehensive overview to make sense of the multiplicity of the actors and

practices as well as support cross-border as well as national cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Cooperation between different actors -> what has already been done, how and how successfully etc. Disseminating good practices -> not all have to be invented again. Contents for activities to suit different seasons. Defining common goals more broadly -> what is the aim of the activities? Making the activities more visible. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)  
(*Original: Eri toimijoiden välistä yhteistyötä -> mitä jo tehdään, millä tavalla, miten on onnistuttu jne. Hyvien käytäntöjen levittämistä -> kaikkea ei tarvitse keksiä itse Toiminnan sisältöjä eri vuodenaikoihin sopivaksi Toiminnan tavoitteiden määrittelyä laajemminkin -> mitä toiminnalla yleisesti tavoitellaan? Toiminnan näkyväksi tekemistä.*)

More knowledge among organizations and authorities on the right of public access and the benefits of nature experiences to individuals. More knowledge on opportunities in the local region, which nature reserves are located in the municipality etc. I need more knowledge on which organisations I can cooperate with and arrange activities together. What forms of cooperation that are possible and common solutions to where funding of projects can be found (the cost of tours and transport, etc.). (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)  
(*Original: Mer kunskap hos organisationer och myndigheter om allemansrätten och vilken positiv effekt naturupplevelser för med sig för individen. mer kunskap om vad som finns i det område man verkar i, vilka reservat finns i kommunen osv. Jag behöver mer kunskap om vilka organisationer man kan samverka med och arrangera aktiviteter tillsammans med. Vilka samverkansformer finns och kan man hitta gemensamma lösningar på den finansiella biten (kostnaden för guidningar och transport osv).*)

3) Furthermore, many respondents raised the need for concrete examples and an overview of the best practices and examples of others work on nature based integration. What works, what does not and why? The respondents stressed that there is no need to repeat the mistakes but the best practices should be transferred efficiently between the actors and across the borders.

To pull off a project, you need to know the platforms that already exist - which cooperation partners that are available in the area, what kind of means there are to cover the cost of e.g. buses and other things, how keen are schools and SFI (Swedish for immigrants) to cooperate? How have others done? How interested are these groups? What is the best possible way to reach those who want to take part? (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)  
(*Original: För att dra igång ett projekt behöver man ju känna till vilka plattformar som redan finns – vilka samarbetspartners som finns i området, vilka medel som går att söka för att bekosta tex bussar och annat, vilken lust till samarbete finns hos skolor och SFI? Hur har andra gjort? Vilken vilja finns hos dessa grupper? Hur når man på bästa sätt de som vill ta del av naturen?)*

4) Fourthly, many of the respondents highlighted that there is a need for supporting materials in organizing nature-based activities and practices. Guidebooks, brochures, booklets, audio and video recordings were seen to be important. Especially materials translated into the immigrants' native languages are in great demand and could easily be shared and distributed across borders. Thus, language is one of the major issues in integration. The new and overwhelming – be it nature, society or culture – opens up more easily in one's mother tongue but learning the native language is a big step in becoming a full member and doing one's part in the Nordic society.

Brochures in Arabic and Dari, with the content also with pictures and in Finnish. Also basic information about sustainable environmental practices (energy consumption, water, chemicals, waste management etc.). (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

(*Original: Arabian- ja darinkielisiä esitteitä, joissa samat asiat myös kuvina ja suomeksi. Myös perustietoa ympäristöstä säästävistä arkikäytännöistä (energia, vesi, kemikaalit jätehuolto ym.).*)

5) Fifthly, the respondents demanded for more financial and human resources for nature-based integration. Some of the respondents were lacking information of potential funding sources and some said that nature-based integration is not possible on solely voluntary basis. In addition, the respondents expressed the need for staff skilled in both nature-based methods and multicultural work. Many stated that especially immigrants that have successfully integrated into the Nordic societies are needed as bridge-builders between Nordic societies and the newcomer immigrant groups.

I need time and opportunities to take immigrants out in nature. Teaching resources have become really limited. There is no time and opportunity, while the days are filled with teaching and evenings and weekends with planning the teaching. More cooperation between different organisers is needed.

(Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

(*Original: Tarvitsen myös aikaa ja mahdollisuuksia viedä maahanmuuttajia retkille luontoon.*

*Opetustyössä resurssit vedetty todella tiukalle. Aikaa ja mahdollisuuksia ei ole, koska päivät täyttyvät opetuksesta ja illat ja viikonloput opetuksen suunnittelusta. Enemmän yhteistyötä eri järjestäjien kanssa.)*

Concluding the third theme, the respondents were asked about the future cross-border collaboration needs in Nordic countries. The respondents agreed that it is important to develop practices for sharing knowledge and experiences of the past and ongoing nature-based integration work. The respondents hoped that the knowledge and expertise dispersed throughout the North would be gathered in one place or platform

where it could be accessed easily and implemented by a range of different actors. Similarly, the respondents suggested developing shared materials and guidelines for nature-based integration and sharing them openly.

Nordic cooperation would be great, gathering knowledge and experiences in a kind of a data bank would be very helpful! Cooperation between research projects and education / course activities for further education would also be a big help. I think that both the public, NGOs and individual actors could cooperate! (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Det vore jättebra med ett nordiskt samarbete, samla kunskap och erfarenheter i en slags data bank vore väldigt hjälpsamt! Evt samarbete omkring forskningsprojekt och utbildning/kurs verksamhet för vidareutbildning vore också en stor hjälp. Jag tycker att både det offentliga, ngo'er og private kunde samarbeta!)*

The respondents demanded for better and more cooperation between organisations and stakeholders both nationally and across borders. According to the respondents, the collaboration should be multilevel, intersectoral and bring the expertise together regardless of any artificial barriers between the sectors. The decision-making level should work for the benefit and cooperate with the grass root level. Common goals and planning would help in defining the policy for a whole region. All in all, the collaboration and knowledge needs seem to indicate a need of a common Nordic network of actors and a platform for sharing the know-how and experiences.

## 2.5 Conclusions

Building collaboration is easier when it is anchored around a common and more defined subject. For the last question we asked the respondents how they think nature-based integration should be defined and what they consider it includes. Being still a rather unknown topic without established definitions, a range of different activities, methods and goals potentially fall under the term. This is also illustrated by the answers, which brought up a spectrum of definitions and different understandings of the term. Many of the respondents, however, emphasized the need for clearer definitions to be able apply the methods and evaluate their effectiveness in more coherent manner.

Firstly, many of the respondents understood nature-based integration as the knowledge, information and learning about the of Nordic nature, traditions, rules and regulations and the rights and responsibilities, take for example the broad everyman's



rights in the Nordic countries. The respondents emphasised that this detailed information and technical knowledge should be passed on to the immigrants to help with their integration. Through learning the required skills and knowledge nature can become a part of everyday life of the newcomers and enhance their wellbeing. Getting rid of the fears and daring to go “out in nature” was also seen as an important part of equality and civil rights as being able to enjoy nature and nature experiences is unarguably one of the most treasured civil rights in the Nordic countries. Granting the immigrants access to nature was also seen to increase their freedom by expanding their environment and possibilities.

Nature based integration consists of basic knowledge of Everyman’s rights and the Finnish way of behaving in nature as well as knowledge on natural areas close to one’s home and information on how to get there. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Luontokotoutumiseen kuuluu perustiedot jokamiehenoikeuksista ja suomalaisesta tavasta käyttäytyä luonnossa sekä tieto oman asuinalueen lähiluontokohteista ja miten niihin pääsee.)*

Nature becomes a familiar part of one’s everyday life. When you know nature and how to use it respectfully, you notice how you can also get help for everyday worries. When you get knowledge on how to go to nature, you can go there alone, which increases your freedom. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Luonto tulee tutuksi osana arkea. Kun tuntee luontoa ja sen kunnioittavaa käyttöä, huomaa saavansa paljon apua arjen murheisiin. Kun saa tietoa luonnossa kulkemisesta, voi sinne mennä yksinkin, vapaus kasvaa.)*

Defined as being out and activities in the open air. Getting to know our culture. Clarify what possibilities exist. Survive on your own in nature and encourage them to get out and explore nature. (Quotation in Norwegian, translation by authors)

*(Original: Defineres som opphold og aktivitet i i friluft. Bli kjent med vår kultur. Synliggjøre hvilke muligheter som finnes. Klare seg på egenhånd i naturen og gi dem lyst til å være og ferdes i naturen.)*

Different nationalities venture out into nature together. We have to teach what rules apply in our nature. Everyman’s rights give both rights and responsibilities that are important to know. But we can also learn a lot on how to benefit from other cultures. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Att olika nationaliteter ger sig ut gemensamt. Vi måste lära ut vad som gäller för vår natur. Allemansrätten ger både rättigheter och skyldigheter och det är viktigt att känna till. Men vi kan också lära mycket som vi kan ha nytta av från andra kulturer.)*

Secondly, nature-based integration was defined as broader arena for all the integration work taking place in the natural environment. At best, nature was seen to offer an equal environment for meeting up and getting to know each other. Functioning in the natural environment was seen to be fundamentally connected to the Nordic culture and mentality so nature was considered as an important arena for immigrants to learn to appreciate and understand their new home country. The respondents also brought up that nature-based integration should not be reduced merely to one-way communication of Nordic knowledge to the immigrants but that also the Nordic residents can have a lot to learn from the newcomers regarding their nature relationship and ways of interacting in the nature.

Nature-based integration is, when nature plays a role in introducing refugees/immigrants to their new home country.

Nature is a neutral arena to meet with oneself, others and the Swedish outdoor culture. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Naturen är en neutral arena för möten med sig själv, andra och den svenska friluftskulturen.)*

Nature-based integration is, in my opinion, all forms of social / physical activity in nature with the target group. Accordingly, this group hereby gets an understanding of the nature that surrounds them, and further how they can use nature both on their own and together with the citizens of the country they have arrived in. (Quotation in Danish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Naturbaseret-integration er efter min mening al form for social/fysisk aktivitet i naturen med målgruppen. Det handler for dem både om at få en forståelse for den natur, som omgiver dem, hvordan de kan indgå i den både på egen hånd og sammen med borgerne i det land de er ankommet til.)*

Thirdly, the respondents highlighted that the nature-based solutions develop individual's personal relationship with nature and enhance their well-being. The nature-based integration activities were hoped to gain a greater application in the societal level and should not be restricted only to the immigrants. Same methods could be utilised to integrate other marginalised groups back in to the society. Similarly, the respondents pointed out that nature could be used in much greater degree as an interface and meeting place between different generations. As one of the respondents demanded, only by appreciating the profound meaning of nature as our home and how dependent

of it we are, from mental to material well-being, we can seize the platform it offers for a deeper mutual understanding and coming together.

Nature-based integration promotes the wellbeing of nature and people, quality of life and the building and deepening of the human-nature relationship in the new home country. (Quotation in Finnish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Luontokotoutuksen avulla edistetään luonnon ja ihmisten hyvinvointia, elämälaatua sekä rakennetaan ja syvennetään luontosuhdetta uudessa kotimaassa.)*

Equal knowledge and access to the opportunities of nature activities. Cross-ethnic participation and use of nature areas and activities, which increase the possibilities of interaction, friendships, positive attitudes and well-being of the population.

Nature-based integration should be defined to include all "outgroups" in society. That is all groups that have difficulties being integrated into the society. (Quotation in Norwegian, translation by authors)

*(Original: Naturbasert integrasjon bør defineres til å omfatte alle "utgrupper" i samfunnet. Dvs alle grupper som har vanskeligheter med å bli integrert i samfunnet.)*

Integration with the help of nature, in nature, regardless of the activity. Integration through getting to know, respect and love nature in itself. Integration through sharing of nature, what nature is for us, it is so important for us Nordic people. (Quotation in Swedish, translation by authors)

*(Original: Integration med hjälp av naturen, i naturen, oavsett aktivitet. Integration genom att lära känna, respektera och få känsla för naturen i sig. Integration genom att dela med oss av naturen, vad naturen är för oss, den som är så viktig för oss nordbor.)*

[Nature-based integration is] a method of shared joy, pride and humility towards nature, [it] promotes an interpersonal understanding of and respect for persons with different religious and ethnic backgrounds. (Quotation in Danish, translation by authors)

*(Original: En metode til gennem en fælles glæde, stolthed og ydmyghed over for naturen, at fremme en mellem-menneskelig forståelse og respekt for personer med en anden religiøs og etnisk baggrund.)*

Using the right words and definitions was deemed as one of the key challenges in nature-based integration. One respondent pointed out the possible dissonant and negative connotations the term "integration" might have and suggested using "inclusion" and "cultural diversity" instead when referring to nature and its integrative benefits. Similarly, the limitations of the term "integration" were pointed out by a respondent who hoped for a better term to represent the potential nature has as a unifying and empowering environment and the benefits it possesses.



## 3. Workshop results

One of the main tasks of the ORIGIN project was to organise a joint Nordic workshop to bring together the project partners and key actors from the countries participating in the project. The workshop took place in Helsinki 5th October 2016 at the Finnish Environment Institute. Since the topic of the project had raised a lot of attention and the launch of the survey had resulted in many queries from different actors, the workshop was kept open to the public. However, the number of attendees was limited in order to keep the workshop relatively small and relaxed as well as allow better opportunities for discussion and networking. A separate closed session at the end of the workshop was reserved for a project meeting.

The workshop had 27 participants; 2 from Denmark, 4 from Sweden, 5 from Norway and 16 from Finland. The participants represented a broad range of different types of organisations which provided a fruitful starting point for networking and discussion. There were representatives of NGOs working on rural development, social services, outdoor recreation and nature protection; representatives of asylum centres and refugee councils; researchers and educators from universities, research institutes and vocational schools; representatives of ministries and state agencies, cities and municipalities as well as SMEs and entrepreneurs offering nature education, therapy, adventures and experiences. The participation of the participants was supported by the use of a digital participation tool (Presemo, screen.io). The tool was used to collect ideas, comments and thoughts during and after the workshop and organise a voting.

### 3.1 Introduction and orientation to the workshop

The workshop began with welcome words by prof. Eeva Furman from the Finnish Environment Institute. Prof. Furman expressed the importance of finding new ways for the successful integration of immigrants into Nordic societies. She revealed that the work of ORIGIN project is also of interest to the European Commission and the results

will be distributed internationally. Prof Furman emphasised that Nordic countries have the potential of becoming forerunners in nature-based integration.

Prof. Furman was followed by Dr. Kati Pitkänen from the Finnish Environment Institute, who presented the project background, aims and methods. Pitkänen reminded that although the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees to Nordic countries has raised questions related to immigration and integration on to everyone's lips, immigration is nothing new in the Nordic sphere. What is new, however, is the orientation of the migration flows. Whereas migration used to be a cross-border phenomenon, the current immigrants come from further away than ever before. Pitkänen presented a preview to the results of the survey, which at that point was still ongoing. Pitkänen concluded that the building of truly multicultural Nordic societies requires mutual learning and starting from a clean slate in which nature-based solutions can offer new, innovative and thus far untapped potential.

### 3.2 Session I: Country presentations

After the two introductory talks the participants got a chance to learn about the various current practices and the state of the art of nature-based integration in different Nordic countries. To begin with Dr. Sandra Gentin from the University of Copenhagen opened up the policy and societal context of nature-based integration in *Denmark*. Natural areas are not, in general, seen as a resource for integration in Denmark and there is no specific mention of access of ethnic minorities to natural areas in the legislation. One of the principles of the Danish Outdoor recreation policy (2015) is that "all groups should have the possibility to use nature – and benefit of it". Dr. Gentin was accompanied by Bente Baekgaard from the Danish Refugee Council who told about the key Danish stakeholders and practical examples in nature-based integration. In Denmark, important actors are Danish Red Cross as well as the various NGOs and municipalities oriented to the practical immigration work, including maintaining asylum centres (Red Cross) and providing social housing (municipalities). In terms of nature-based methods, the Danish Nature Agency collaborates with municipalities to include nature into the activities offered for immigrants. Danish Refugee Council together with University of Copenhagen is currently launching a project *Naturven* which aims to bring together refugees/immigrants and ethnic Danes in natural environments to facilitate social cohesion and integration.

*Sweden* was presented in the workshop by three presenters. Eva Sandberg from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences begun with a short introduction to nature-based integration and the work of the Swedish Center for Nature Interpretation. Nature interpretation is a practice and field of research that focuses on the mediation of nature communication with different participants. Finding the right ways to interpret and mediate nature and nature experiences to immigrants is in the heart of nature-based integration. After Sandberg, Sandra Löfgren from the Stockholm Archipelago Foundation and Ali Abdulaziz from Hushållnings-skällskapet (Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies) told about their own and their organisations' experiences in nature-based practices for immigrants. The purpose of the Stockholm Archipelago Foundation is to keep the archipelago landscape in Stockholm area open and ensure that citizens and visitors have the opportunity for recreation and rewarding experiences in the area. The foundation has worked especially with children with foreign background and disabilities to develop paths for and best practices to enjoy the archipelago nature and learn from it. The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, in turn, promote the possibilities of rural areas in green integration. Rural areas offer several opportunities for immigrants for work and well-being not available in the cities. The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies has organised training for immigrants, for instance, in forest work, farming and berry and mushroom picking.

From *Norway*, Elisabeth Sem Christensen from the Oslo municipality introduced the Groruddalen Urban Regeneration programme. The programme is a cooperative project between the Norwegian Government and the municipality of Oslo that has existed for 10 years since 2007. The programme aims to improve the standard and quality of life in the Grorud valley which is a residential area struggling with many physical, economic, structural and social challenges. Special focus in the programme is on promoting social inclusion and public health. The programme actively engages local residents, NGOs, private companies and other public agencies to strengthen local environmental qualities and the living environment.

Country presentations ended in three case presentations from *Finland*. Tuomo Salovuori presented the nature-based integration model developed in the Finish Blue Ribbons' project Vihreä Veräjä (2011–2016). Vihreä Veräjä aims at developing Green Care methods to enhance the well-being of a variety of special groups, such as immigrants. The project has developed a nature integration guide that contains suggestions for practical nature-based activities during different seasons and months. The NGO has worked with immigrants of Somali, Iraqi, Afgan and in general Middle-

Eastern background. After Salovuori, Saara Airaksinen presented three projects of Metsähallitus (State Forest Enterprise) that have targeted especially the needs of immigrants. Metsähallitus, Parks & Wildlife Finland, responsible for the management of Finnish protected areas, is often referred to as the pioneer of nature-based integration in Finland. In the projects presented by Airaksinen, immigrants were introduced to the Finnish nature through various nature-based activities and raising their awareness of the possibilities of outdoor recreation. The session was finished by Helena Kempas from Suomen Latu, which is the leading outdoor association in Finland with nearly 200 local member associations around the country. Their vision is that everyone can find a meaningful way to engage in outdoor recreational activities and to be able to enjoy nature. Immigrants, new Finns and asylum seekers have been increasingly included as a focus group in the activities of the different member associations.

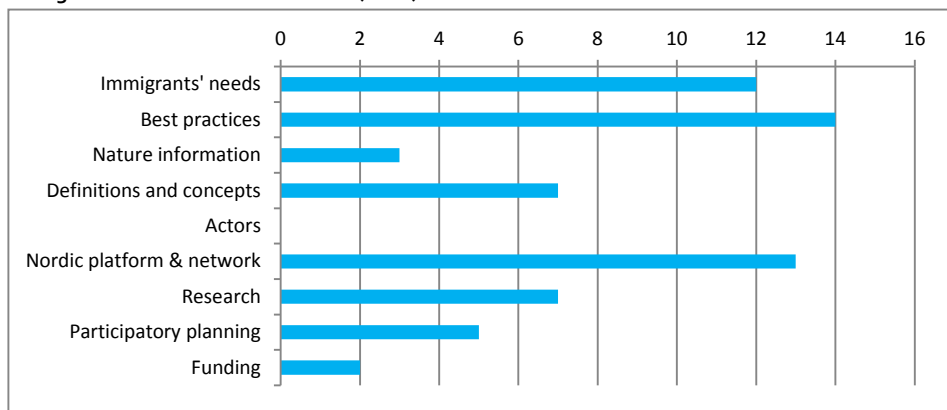
The practical presentations from the four countries illustrated the multitude of activities and practices that are currently targeted at the various immigrant groups in order to enhance their knowledge on Nordic nature and outdoor recreation, engage them in the different activities and promote social interaction between the different population groups. Especially many NGOs across the Nordic countries have been flexible in meeting the needs of the growing immigrant groups. Besides several good experiences and positive feedback from the immigrants taking part in these projects, also several challenges and problems were raised by the presenters as well as by the participants commenting on the presentations.

### **3.3 Session II: Nordic priorities and development needs**

The second session was targeted at creating a joint understanding of the key issues and development needs in Nordic countries. Joose Oratuomi from the Finnish Environment Institute opened the session with a short presentation of the themes that emerged in the Nordic survey. The key themes from the survey were then listed and the workshop participants were asked to vote for three themes they considered the most important for future Nordic development and cooperation in nature-based integration. The voting was conducted using the Screenio facilitation tool, which enabled the participants to vote using their smart phones, laptops or tablets. The results of the voting are presented in the figure 10.



**Figure 10: Most important themes for future development and cooperation (choose 3), results of the voting from Screen.io facilitation tool (N=22)**



Three themes stand out from the results. Firstly, identifying best practices and models was voted as the key priority for future Nordic cooperation it was held very important to collect information and experiences on what has been done in different countries, regions and contexts and what kind of practices have been more successful than others. This is also in line with the survey respondents' emphasis on knowledge sharing, as mentioned in the previous section chapter 4.4.

Secondly the participants at the workshop voted that there should be a joint forum or a platform for the Nordic cooperation and knowledge exchange in nature-based integration. The Nordic platform could work as a place to store information, practical guidance and materials that could be used across borders. Most importantly, a Nordic platform is needed as a channel to connect different public, private and third sector actors to share experiences and develop practices. One of the workshop participants commented that:

Regarding the future I hope and wish that we can together pave a road to form a network, and through this come up with best practices, definitions and concepts and more research.

Thirdly, the need to better identify and take into consideration the needs of the immigrants themselves was voted as an important cornerstone of any future cooperation and development. Much alike the survey respondents, the workshop participants highlighted that a better understanding of the fears, hopes and needs of

the immigrants is needed as well as understanding of the different cultural backgrounds and customs in interacting with nature and the various benefits interacting with nature has on immigrants. Nature-based integration should not only be a one-way process, but true interaction that takes into consideration the needs and abilities of all parties involved. In her feedback, one of the workshop participants described these needs:

We have different cultures and we behave differently. If I walk in the archipelago I'm looking for silence and peace – if I bump into a loud group and wildly discussion, I might be both afraid and disturbed. Perhaps the group finds me grumpy and not willing to integrate? Perhaps we sometimes only have different ways of enjoying nature. We need to open up for trying it both ways and respecting one another.

In the discussion following the voting it was suggested that one of the first steps for any further cooperation and networking should actually be to try to find a joint understanding and definition for the concept of nature-based integration. In order to be able to define best practices the effects of the different practices need to be evaluated and assessed. Like one of the workshop participants put it: ... how we could “measure integration” while having nature-based activities – could we – or should we – separate “integrational nature-based activities” from “any nature-based activities”. Hence, more discussion as well as integration of scientific as well as practical knowledge is needed to understand what nature-based integration can and should be about, what kind of aims it should have, how nature can promote integration or bring other benefits to both the immigrants as well as to the Nordic societies.

### 3.4 Workshop feedback

The participants had the possibility to comment and leave feedback on all the workshop content throughout the workshop as well as afterwards using the online participation tool. Although this possibility was used only by some of the participants, the received feedback turned out to be highly valuable. In general, the participants agreed that the workshop was needed and that the ORIGIN project should only be the first step for more intensive cooperation in this theme across borders in the Nordic countries. It was agreed that the workshop managed to give an overview of the recent developments in the different countries:

Workshop was well arranged. It gave a good overview of nature-based integration work in Nordic countries.

It was lovely to meet everybody and hear about what has been done elsewhere.

The critical comments, however, raised the need for having more time for proper discussions. It was commented that the one-day workshop managed only to touch the surface of the upcoming and timely issue. Some of the participants left concrete suggestions on, for instance, how group discussions could be arranged by splitting participants into different thematic groups and inviting also representatives of immigrant groups to share their ideas and experiences.

Longer seminar is a good idea, so many things to discuss. And for the possible future workshop – it would be great to work more in a “workshop style”.

I would have hoped for a bit more discussion from the integration point of view.

In one day it was impossible to achieve more, but hopefully in the future there is more time to reflect on different kind of approaches and ideas.

It would be great to have more discussions... perhaps in small groups...



# 4. Examples of current practices

## 4.1 Denmark: Examples of current nature-based practices

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### 4.1.1 Introduction

In general, integration of refugees and immigrants is the responsibility of the 98 municipalities in Denmark. The municipalities are obliged by law (Lovbekg. Nr. 1094 af 7.10.2014) to focus on getting immigrants and refugees “ready for work” and “ensure education”. Accordingly, nature based integration is not part of the municipalities’ provided integration effort. However, some municipalities e.g. Frederikshavn and Skive in Northern Jutland are collaborating with the local unit of the Nature Agency,<sup>2</sup> where refugees are “tested” for their readiness for work based on various nature management tasks (e.g. maintenance of paths and bogs or other smaller tasks) in the state owned forests around Frederikshavn and Skive (Naturstyrelsen, n.d.).

Both Red Cross and the Danish Refugee Council have a number of voluntary groups in all of the 98 municipalities in Denmark. These groups offer a range of different activities, e.g. food clubs, help with homework for pupils, social gatherings. Many of the groups also offer activities or trips into the local nature. The aims of the trips are to establish social bonds among the participants and to get away from the social housing area. Trips can e.g. be walking in the forest to pick berries or mushrooms, bicycle trips to the nearby forest or other activities, where nature activities are in focus.

Furthermore, some of the social workers (alone or together with volunteers/groups of Red Cross, Danish Refugee Council or Save the Children Denmark) in the various

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<sup>2</sup> The Danish Nature Agency is the institution under the “Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark”, which in practice promotes and implements the Governments environment and nature policy, and manages the national forests and other state owned nature areas.

social housing areas also provide a variety of activities for the residents. Nature based activities are often part of these activities.

It can be seen from the above that mainly private organizations use nature and provide nature based activities in their work with immigrants and refugees. Therefore, the use of nature as means of integration for newcomers is very much based on the initiative of single stakeholders or persons with only little or no exchange of ideas or experiences.

In the following chapter, the program "You laugh with your entire body" for traumatized refugees and their families was run by Save the Children Denmark from 2011–2014 will be described.

#### ***4.1.2 Example of nature based integration provided by Save the children Denmark "You laugh with your entire body"***

The program "You laugh with your entire body" was a collaboration between three partners: Save the Children Denmark, Center for survivors of torture and trauma, and Livsmødlab.dk. During the project period from 2011 to 2014 approximately 800 families and children with war traumas, and 60 volunteers have participated in the project

Activities offered where four four-day family camps for 35 parents, and their children, as well as 32 one-day trips and season-get-together. About 60 parents and children have participated in each activity (trips and season get-togethers). Nature, outdoor recreation activities and resilience promoting plays have been in focus at both camps and one-day trips.

The background for this program was a study by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing from 2013 showing that the effort for children in traumatized refugee families in the future should focus on 1) work with the families' isolation with activities aimed at the families, 2) coherent activities for the families, 3) collaboration with volunteers in various organizations, 4) include more unconventional issues in treatment, e.g. nature.

Save the Children Denmark has used activities in nature for 8 years and their experiences have shown that these activities give the opportunity for comprehensive and very effective work with the families' relationships and networks e.g. when sitting around the bonfire and talking, going for a walk in the forest; experiencing the effects of recreation and the tranquility of nature. Nature based activities give new experiences and opportunities for other activities; and the refugees and immigrants get another opportunity to learn about the new country, language, nature etc.

Specific focus in the activities both at camps and one-day trips was to work with the families' resilience – based on Michael Ungar's (2005) 5 c's: Competence, Community, Confidence, Connection and Caring. Prior to each camp a "camp theme" was appointed for the camp. It was important that the themes:

- were easy to recognize
- should inspire to various activities in nature
- had an universal frame for storytelling, a frame which is known by everyone regardless of nationality
- should inspire the participants' fantasy, creativity and craftwork
- The themes were: Indians (American Indians); circus, Nature and play, Pirates.

Especially the themes' relation to crafts has shown to be very important as the artefacts created by the participants where a useful tool in remembering the camp, when the participants returned to their everyday life. Recurrent activities at the camps were: activities in nature, bonfire and cooking at the bonfire, walks in the forests, teaching in and about nature, carving of wood and working with axes, joyful plays, sports such as soccer, and "rounders" (baseball style ball game).

Besides the summer camps the participants had the opportunity to participate on 6–8 one-day trips/year. Like the summer camps, the majority of these trips involved some kind of nature-based activity e.g. sailing, fishing, walks in the forest or trips to nature based playgrounds. A few one-day trips included visits to the zoo. These tours often had 45 parents and children participating, and these participants often knew each other from the summer camps, hereby giving the opportunity to recapture and meet again. The aim of these recurrent one-day trips was to give the participants the opportunity to meet again, hereby strengthening their network.

#### **4.1.3 Target group and responsibility of program**

The primary target group of the program is children and adolescents aged between 0–18 years old, the secondary target group are the children's parents. One or both parents had to be in therapy or treatment for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) at Center for Survivors of Torture and Trauma during the last years, and live in Region

of Southern Denmark. The interest for participation in the program was very high, and not all interested families got the opportunity to participate.

Nature-interpreter Thor Hjarsen from Save the children Denmark, Family therapist Knud Eschen (Center for Survivors of Torture and Trauma) and development consultant Dorthe Rasmussen from Livsmodlab.dk constituted the project management group. They were responsible for the development and progress of the project.

Volunteers at the summer camps and on the one-day trips were mainly recruited among the group of volunteers from Save the children Denmark. But also other stakeholders working with vulnerable groups in society were involved as volunteers.

#### **4.1.4**     *Evaluation of the practice, pros and cons*

In general, parents, adolescents and the children have been very positive about the program. Both trips and family camps were delightful breaks in the participating families' everyday life, and the adolescents emphasize that their parents are happier and more relaxed at the camps. Furthermore, the adolescents highlighted that it is important that the volunteers are persons who are easy to talk to.

The two adolescents who participated in the evaluation of the project stated that it is important that the activities are also suitable for older children or adolescents and are not too "childish". They emphasized that adults should have more time on their own, in order to let them talk and socialize without kids, which according they thought was very enjoyable for their parents. Also the parents enjoyed both summer-camps and one-day trips.

In general, the project has contributed to stronger bonds between the children and the parents. The activities gave the children the opportunity to see their parents in another context: instead of being ill, weak and sad, the children saw their parents in balance, happy and engaged.

#### **4.1.5**     *Lessons learnt and transferability of program*

The project is to great extend based on the work of the volunteers at the summer camps, as well as the presence of professionals at the camps who can follow up on the activities etc. with the families from a therapeutic point of view. The volunteers are now anchored in the local group of Save the Children Denmark in Odense, they are now in practice responsible for the activities and summer camps for the families.



Nature based activities with persons with PTSD set demands to the nature used for the activities. E.g. nature and facilities have to be open, accessible and secure/safe.

This program was run in close collaboration between several partners who had a professional approach to the traumatized families. This program could easily be run in other regions and other countries, as long as there are professionals who take care of the treatment and therapy of the participating families with PTSD, as well as persons who have a working experience in preparing and conducting nature-based activities which promote resilience.

#### **4.1.6**      *General comments and concluding remarks*

As this program is one of the first systematic interventions in Denmark, the authors of the evaluation state that more research on the topic is needed. Especially the long term effects of a program like the described one could give more information of the difference such an intervention has made for the participants in the long term. The target group was families with either one or both parents with PTSD – it is emphasized that professional treatment and therapy can only be conducted by professionals, and participation by professionals at the summer camps is necessary. Evaluation and the possibility for the volunteers to share and discuss their experiences at the summer camp with the other participating volunteers and professionals is central.

## **4.2**      **Sweden: Green Integration**

*Ali Abdulaziz, Project Assistant, The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (Hushållningsällskapet), Sweden*

The aim of Green Integration is that rural areas benefit from the foreign-born knowledge, experience and interests. To achieve this, everyone working for integration and diversity in both private and public sector must have a better awareness of the possibilities in rural areas. Rural economies also need to build a better understanding of the skills and experiences that foreign-born bring in to Sweden – knowledge that can contribute to rural development.

The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies want more foreign-borns to be able to work or run businesses in rural areas. Rural areas can offer new opportunities not

available in the city. Many foreign-born people come to Sweden with knowledge of farming, animal husbandry or food processing – skills hardly needed in bigger cities. There are also many other jobs in the field of energy, engineering, healthcare and economy. In the countryside there are all kinds of jobs, just like in the city. The association wants that more foreign-borns have the opportunity to live and work in rural areas. Therefore we make visible accommodation, education options and leisure activities available in the rural areas also for the foreign-born.

Today's consumer demands for the locally cultivated and produced organic products exceed the supplies of the local producers. There are great opportunities to develop entrepreneurship in professional horticulture, sheep and goat farming or in small-scale food processing. Green integration gives a chance to see the opportunities in the countryside with new eyes. This can create new business opportunities, new products and new services. The countryside is facing a major generational shift. By utilizing the foreign-born experience and knowledge this shift can be turned from a threat into an opportunity.

Role of the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies is to create interaction and dialogue between urban and rural areas – between immigrants and the rural economy. We want to match rural resources, rich in possibilities, with foreign-born knowledge, experience and interests. The association can also provide expertise to facilitate this matching. Through Green Integration we want to create opportunities for diversity, rural development and a more international countryside.

The association wants to promote the rural development by generating and supplying knowledge for the use of its industries. Historically, among other things, it has had the role in initiating change with the ambition to cherish new ideas and trends for the countryside's good. On that basis we see it as our role to seize the knowledge of the foreign-born in a way that benefits the rural development.

#### **4.2.1 *Project 1: Capacity building in forestry and farming/small-scale food production***

The project was collaboration between the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies West and Swedish Employment Service, aimed towards foreign-born and native-born students to get together and integrate. The aim of the project was:

- To provide basic knowledge in forestry, chain saws and clearing together with forest Green Card or in horticulture including greenhouses (see Table 2).

- Both programs aimed to give opportunities for internships and increase employability in the respective field.

**Table 2: Contents of the forestry and horticulture education**

Contents of the forestry education:	Contents of the farming/small-scale food production education:
Green Card.	Basic training for cultivation.
Brush cutter education.	Theory indoors.
Chain saw education.	Theory and practice outdoors.
Theory indoors.	Hands-on tips and tricks for cultivation.
Theory and practice outdoors.	Food hygiene.
Test to get a license for the chain saw, brush saw, Green Card.	Experiences of farmers and entrepreneurs.
Information about the countryside and opportunities regarding internships or jobs.	Study of interested retailers, wholesalers and/or restaurants.
Information about the labour legislation and the working environment.	Information about countryside and the opportunities regarding internship or job.
Insight into starting your own business.	Information about the labour legislation and the working environment.
	Insight into starting your own business.

## Results

Foreign-born students learned the Swedish language and had more contact with Swedish society and the Swedish participants got to learn about other cultures. Many participants got jobs and / or internships after graduation. Positive feedback was received from the participants. They got jobs and associates and got the opportunity to integrate into the community (see Table 3–4, Figure 11–12).

**Table 3: Results of the Forestry program**

Forestry program	Number of participants	Passed brush saw A	Passed brush saw B	Passed chain saw A	Passed chain saw B	Job	Internship
Employment office 1	12	10	8	10	9	7	2
Employment office 2	12	10	10	11	11	5	3
Employment office 3	12	11	11	12	7	4	3
Employment office 4	12	10	10	11	9	2	1
Total						18	9

Figure 11: Education in the forest. Some of the participants are working in the woods today



Photo: Hushållningsällskapet.

Table 4: Results of the Cultivation program

Cultivation program	Number of participants	Job	Internship
Employment office 1	12	4	3
Employment office 2	8	4	0
Employment office 3	8	2	0
Employment office 4	6	2	1
Total		12	9

Figure 12: Farming education. The participants learned how to grow vegetables in Sweden



Photo: Hushållningssällskapet.

#### 4.2.2 *Project 2: Community garden and children's zoo on Restad Gård refugee housing*

The project aims to develop and support the cultivation in the community gardens for children and young people and the construction of the children's zoo at Restad Gård, one of the biggest asylum accommodations in Sweden. The objectives of the project:

- To give the children and their families living in Restad Gård the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and berries.
- To encourage getting out into the fresh air, get access to home-grown vegetables and learn more about the origins of food and organic farming.
- To have the opportunity to learn more about nature and animals, and to help with the animals close to their homes as a meaningful leisure activity.
- To get the newcomers and local residents meet in the community gardens and children's zoo to get to know each other and to exchange their knowledge.
- To give the children and young people living on Restad Gård a connection to the Swedish countryside through activities during the project, like seeing the cows jump for joy on the first spring pasture.

**Figure 13: Cultivation in Restad Gård**



Photo: Hushållningssällskapet.

## Introduction

Cultivation is fundamental. Even though we have not done it for a long time it seems to be in us. You can see people lighten up when they pull a carrot from the soil. It does not matter if it is big and nice, or very small, everyone is happy to see the little seed they sowed last spring that has now developed into a carrot.

When we meet with the children in the autumn and tell them that now it is time to clean up and make the pallet boxes ready so that we can grow in them again next year, they look at me with their little eyes and plod to their pallets. They get their hands dirty and point out that they want gloves. They whine about the stinging thorns and the atmosphere is slightly negative. But then something happens! A child that embarked on a pallet box suddenly holds a carrot and raises it proudly up in the air to show everyone the discovery. Suddenly the mood changes and now everyone wants to find carrots in their boxes and to start digging. One by one they light up when they find not one but several carrots. Despite the carrots being bigger than a few centimeters all are overjoyed.

When we finish the meeting, we talk a little about how the carrots in the store look and how their harvested carrots look and what is the difference. Children realize that plants need sun and water. We explain that carrots do not like to be cramped with all the other plants in the box and they understand. Next year we aim to clear the weeds more diligently which will yield better crops. But when it comes to the children, they are proud and happy regardless of the size of the carrots.

The feeling is the same when we work with adults. They are proud. When we get there they wave to me to come over and see what they have grown. Proudly they show the lettuce, beets, big beautiful sunflowers, carrots, parsley, potatoes and beans.

A man has made a valiant attempt to grow tomatoes under gauze. The plants are thin and sagging but he finds a small tomato and offers it to me. I think that a greenhouse would have been more suited to his ambitions. Cultivation is a good activity because it is easy to implement, anyone can do it, it feels good to be outdoors and everyone is happy when they pull a carrot out of the ground!

## Background of the project

The project idea was developed in a collaboration between the school of Restad Gård refugee accommodation (both the children and teachers), the property owners, the Swedish Migration Agency and the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies West. Places where things happen often have the ability to become natural meeting places

for people. Good places for community gardens are also located near playgrounds and football fields. People with different interests can meet and learn from each other.

One important idea in the project is that the children's zoo and the gardens will increase integration between residents of Vänersborg area and Restad Gård. School classes from all over the municipality will be able to come to Restad and see the animals and meet the children who live there. The children's zoo is supposed to be an attraction for the entire municipality, also for families and individuals who want to get out and see the animals, pet the animals and learn more about the animals, animal care and husbandry.

Community gardens and children's zoo can contribute to better health for the residents in Restad Gård as they give a reason for people to get out and get moving. Migration Agency, property owners and NGOs that we have been in contact with all tell that asylum seekers are sitting indoors for much of their free time, even when the weather is good. When the children are involved in growing their own food, vegetables become a more natural part of their diet, which is an important issue to work with on asylum accommodation. Good nutrition increases the chance of a good life. Overall, there is no doubt that nature as a whole, garden and animals contribute significantly to the health and quality of life. Research shows nature's positive effects on health.



Figure 14: Green rural integration



Photo: Hushållningssällskapet.

## Implementation and method

The project has been carried out based on a model where we show how everything fits together from farm to table, from the seed sown to the harvesting of food for both humans and animals. The pedagogy is based on that it should be fun to learn as the motivation and knowledge go hand in hand. We're talking about the environment, recycling and composting. Compost and manure becomes nutrition for the gardens and we create a small circle on Restad Gård. Horticulturists from the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies West have demonstrated the importance of taking good care of what we sow in order to get a good harvest.

Throughout the project we have worked closely with the school teachers and planned and designed activities based on the school conditions and opportunities. Work with the children has taken place in small groups with a space for dialogue with the children around the activities. On average there have been about 12 children per group and each time we have had each group for a whole lesson. Overall, there were 96 students in the activities conducted during the spring semester. During the fall semester there has been fewer, around 80–90 students.

As the basic idea of the project is that it will survive after the project ends, the school is constantly involved in all activities addressed to children. Much of the material produced in the project and the methods used will be used by the school after the project ends. The same applies to the gardens that take place on free time and on voluntary basis. The project has, as far as possible, acted as a mentor and provided knowledge. Children and adults involved have been managing their farms largely on their own.

## Goal fulfillment

Three of the described project goals have been fulfilled with good measure before the first year is over.

Community gardens have given the children and their families living in Restad Gård the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and berries. All children who attend school have been able, both during school hours and free time, to grow their own vegetables and learn more about the cultivation and its conditions.

Implemented activities have led to children to have opportunities to get out into the fresh air, get access to home-grown vegetables and learn more about the origins of food and organic farming. Children also had the opportunity to learn more about animals and nature. However, we haven't been able to meet the objective that the

children could receive help in managing the animals at the petting zoo because the planning has taken more time than expected.

When it comes to the goal of getting the new arrivals and local residents to meet in the community gardens and children's zoo, to get to know each other and exchange knowledge, we have partially achieved that goal. An important meeting point in this context is the planned petting zoo, but as it is not yet in place, we haven't actively organized visits for e.g. school classes to Restad Gård. There was a lot of work required in starting the activities and the focus has been getting the Restad Gård residents to take part. For the next growing season we are also going to devote more resources to get more Swedes to participate in the gardening.

The goal of getting the children and young people living in Restad Gård in touch with the Swedish countryside through activities during the project will be partially met when we arrange the trip to Åsnebyn cultural reserve with school classes from Restad Gård. In the second year we will continue to work so that the children get more contact with the Swedish countryside and the various opportunities it provides.

Unfortunately we were not able to reach the goal of having a children's zoo in place during the first year of the project, because the planning has taken longer than expected. The design work is now complete and we are waiting for permission. We anticipate that the children's zoo with the animals is going to be in place in the spring or early summer of 2017.

### 4.3 Sweden: The archipelago education place

*Sandra Löfgren, Archipelago Foundation (Skärgårdsstiftelsen) in Stockholm County, Sweden*

The archipelago education place is a three year project run by the Archipelago Foundation in Stockholm County with funding from the Swedish Inheritance Fund. The project started in 2014 and ended in December 2016. The project manager is Sandra Löfgren who has previous experience as a teacher and special education teacher in elementary school grades 6–9.

### 4.3.1 *Background*

The idea of the project is to showcase the archipelago environment and its treasures for a younger generation who is nowadays quite far away from the Archipelago Foundation. The target group is specifically people with disabilities and people with a foreign background, but the idea and the goal is that all children should be included and that no group is excluded. The goal is for them to feel comfortable in the sites and revisit them with their families, friends or others in order to experience the natural resources of the archipelago and the opportunities it provides for recreation and outdoor activities. In this way, we have a part in meeting the objectives of the Swedish outdoor life policy.

Archipelago Foundation's lands are all nature reserves and protected areas, and it was an obvious decision to turn to schools to reach children and offer them field studies concerning the Baltic Sea and the forests. Our hope is that through this detailed mission the children will develop a sense of the place becoming "their", and that they'll become extra careful about the site and understand the purpose of protecting nature. We also want to increase the knowledge about what protected nature has to offer for people and how even an individual child may help to protect it. Archipelago Foundation wants to contribute to the creation of good relationships between children and nature through fun and useful, interesting, involving and active exercises.

Figure 15: Nature as a place of education



Photo: Skärgårdsstiftelsen.

#### 4.3.2 *Selection of sites*

The choice of sites has been relatively easy because we wanted to offer places reachable by public transport and suitable for a day trip. It was also important that the sites already are established visiting places. This makes it easier for the visitor in terms of toilets, pathways and communication. Hjälmö Island was selected as it is already a visited area where also guided walks are organized both for schools and groups of adults. There is an ecological archipelago farm where we focus on its diversity and link it to the course objectives. All four sites have different themes to make the visit unique and detailed. Though, overall all of them explore the elements of the Baltic Sea.

#### 4.3.3 *Project owner and manager*

The Archipelago Foundation is responsible for the project and along the way several relationships have been created between the foundation and different organizations.

Disability organizations RBU and DHB, and voluntary defence organization FBU have been involved from the start in different degrees. The pilot schools have had an important part in the development of training materials and activity choices. All kinds of schools from compulsory schools, from schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and from schools with exclusively children of foreign origin have participated with great enthusiasm. Teachers from different schools have come up with suggestions, needs and ideas to facilitate the operation in practice, in particular regarding the course objectives. The students have enthusiastically contributed to the evaluation of attraction and difficulty of the activities and come up with more ideas and suggestions. They have also been involved in the making of the material e.g. the signs, movie clips and explanatory drawings (see <https://vimeo.com/139237550>).

**Figure 16: Taking care of nature together**



Photo: Skärgårdsstiftelsen.

#### 4.3.4 Results

##### Education material and Wi-Fi points

Education material was produced for four different locations in the Stockholm archipelago: Riddersholm in Norrtälje, Hjälmö in Värmdölandet, Björnö in Ingarö and Gålö in Haninge. The materials consists of teacher instructions, daily schemes, selected stories, suggested activities, protocols, exercises for later and so forth. Everything has a connection to the curriculum of both basic and special education. All the materials are available for free at the Archipelago Foundation's website and are also available for e-book reader for children with e.g. a visual impairment using special software for reading (see <http://skargardsstiftelsen.se/besöksinformation/utbildningsplats-skargarden/>).

Wi-Fi points for all four sites. These local networks are primarily for the digital support for school groups visiting the sites. They are filled with information about the site, movie clips and trivia in which you can reply directly with mobile or tablet. All the movies have been translated into sign language. We are especially proud of our welcoming movies that the young participants have produced during a workshop with a film crew. The screenplay is based on the concerns that the children and youth with a foreign background had during the visits to the archipelago. The young participants, together with a writer and each other did a great job in translating the Swedish text to their own native languages. All information is also on a separate web page to facilitate the preparations for the visit. Links to materials:

- <http://www.laguide.se/riddersholm/>
- <http://www.laguide.se/hjalmo/>
- <http://www.laguide.se/galo/>
- <http://www.laguide.se/bjorno/>

##### Nature trail, trolls and other beings

In Riddersholm we chose to work with the flora and fauna and made a self-guided nature trail including an educational movie. With the help of supervisor Gunnar Lodin's knowledge of the site's flora and fauna we have filmed the spots and then translated them to sign language with the help of Hanna Bergström (see <http://www.laguide.se/riddersholm/Naturstig/dynamic-se.html?t=147473104>).

Along the paths of Gålö and Björnö, the project participants set up self-made trolls and other beings among the trees and bushes. These were created in a workshop which was open for all pilot schools to send participants to. It was organized in Nacka during the autumn holidays in 2015. Workshop participants consisted of children, teachers, staff from the Archipelago Foundation, craft professionals known from TV, film crew, journalist, writer, graphic designer, marine biologist, editor and project manager. Together with the children we created picture material for the signs, trolls and beings of all kinds and descriptions for them, movie clips (welcoming movie, information clips), pictures and drawings delivering both facts and design with the help of a marine biologist and graphic designer. All the material created during the workshop is used in some way in the project.

### Signs and field material

All sites now have welcome signs that tell about the project, how the QR code works, maps and information about the training places and more, a signposted path, large signs about which animals can be expected to find above the water and under the water, and signs calling for attention e.g. for looking around the surroundings etc. Also created was a real size eagle sculpture, for comparing one's size and enlarged sculptures of mussel and barnacle for discussing the tiniest of the Baltic Sea beings which is also one of the most important and troublesome, respectively. All four sites also now have a box for borrowing material to use for free. There are fishnets, binoculars, magnifiers, field books, guides for identifying species and other things to cope with on a field day.

#### 4.3.5 *More contributors*

Delightfully, several other organisations have chosen to step in and financially contribute to a greater good. For example county council has allocated us SEK 300,000 from the archipelago grants to open pathways in Riddersholm and Gålö. We also received SEK 250,000 from Gålö Foundation to build a pier in Gålö where we also made a path and had a station called "Sinnenas Udde" during the project. The foundation Stiftelsen Kobben funded the project with SEK 40,000 to make a portal gateway in Gålö. It has been very successful and popular as well as good for educational purposes for the children with intellectual disabilities and neuropsychological impairment, i.e. they have something to "go into".



In Haninge we have established cooperation with Lisa Lundin who operates Environmental Workshop and runs a nature school for school groups. Environmental Workshop has for a long time lacked materials and space to work on the Baltic Sea and now, thanks to the Training Place Gålö, decided that every grade 6 will have access to it through them. Thanks to cooperation between the Environment Workshop and Archipelago Foundation we even got the bus company Nobina to reach out and offer the groups an option to travel with a school ticket from Västerhaninge to Gålö in an extra line. This means that it is now possible, according to plan, for schools in Haninge to continuously visit the Training Place Gålö. Same goes for schools further away who can connect in Västerhaninge. On Gålö we also have Gålö Havsbad (<http://www.galohavsbad.se>) who are more than pleased to make use of the materials with the staying groups.

Camping and Hostel Fritidsbyn in Riddersholm now has a clear pathway for its day visitors and can integrate the educational material and guided tours to the accommodation for schools and groups. We are expecting more and more school visits in Hjälmsjö utilizing these materials that we find very helpful for the educators and guides planning a visit. Björnö is nowadays very popular visiting place and has attracted new enthusiasts around the suburbs. The training material will be helpful for strengthening the understanding of the place.

Figure 17: Nature school



Photo: Skärgårdsstiftelsen.

#### 4.3.6 *Lessons learned*

The project has taught the Archipelago Foundation a lot about how important the information is for newcomers and how we should not employ just text in the future but rather produce supporting images. We have also learned that those who come from countries such as e.g. Somalia, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Jordan, Thailand, and Ethiopia have completely different preconditions and backgrounds regarding e.g. waste management, access to land and security issues. It is important for us to keep that in mind when making plans and inviting people in. We have also taken notice of the need to improve accessibility of people with hearing loss, visual impairment and reduced mobility.

Through the numerous good relationships built with other organizations during the project we are beginning the work to ensure the enduring future of the project and are now entering the “post-production” phase where we are going to establish strong contacts in our brand new network constituted in the project and School Forum. We are hoping for more and continuing visits to the Foundation’s lands and look forward to more children and young people in the Archipelago.

#### **Quote from a teacher**

“I’ve got through a project funding for grades 4–6.

4th grade will go to Gålö.

5th grade will go to Björnö.

And the 6th grade will sail in the Shamrock ship.

We are going to hire a bus and even get to buy the necessary equipment for our visit.

Now I will seek further contributions from the Heritage Fund!

We are going to make our own school pathway just like in the Training Place Archipelago.

The trolls and texts along the path.

We’ll play creepy-crawlies in the PE class.

Sawing and sewing.

Writing stories and painting pictures.

And we will have all the science classes about the archipelago!

Thank you Training Place Archipelago for all the inspiration!”

(Monica from Fagersjö School).

#### **4.4 Sweden: Profound trust in nature’s integrative power and extensive interaction<sup>3</sup>**

*Eva Sandberg, Swedish Center for Nature Interpretation, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden*

Thanks to their commitment, good language skills and a unique collaboration between the various actors in Örebro municipality Adil Sadiku from Kosovo and Antonios Hanna

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<sup>3</sup> The text is an adaptation of an article in *Naturvågledaren* 1:2016, Theme: Nature Interpretation and Integration. Published by the Swedish Center for Nature Interpretation (CNV). Author of the original article is Erika Hagegård.

from Syria have been able to be educated as nature guides. They have now become sought-after professionals who can guide you in nature in Örebro in five different languages: Albanian, Arabic, Syriac, Swedish and English.

**Figure 18:** Adil Sadiku and Antonios Hanna are nature interpreters in Örebro county



Photo: The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation in Örebro County.

In six months Adil Sadiku and Antonios Hanna completed their part-time studies in Swedish for immigrants (SFI) with work experience as nature guides. Together with the tutor Kajsa Grebäck of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) in Örebro County they visited 14 local natural and cultural reserves to learn all about nature and to practice their skills as guides, while at the same time developing their language skills. In the beginning Adil and Antonios started in the so-called municipal entry-level jobs in which you work half the time and study Swedish for immigrants (SFI) the other half. Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Employment Service) paid part of it, and the rest was

covered by the municipality and the conservation organization Hopajola. Adil and Antonios were also positioned in the SSNC's office at Föreningarnas Hus when they were not out in the woods.

#### **4.4.1**     *A successful project*

The project has had a positive impact for the individuals and also for the participating organizations. Adil and Antonios have become fully trained nature guides and improved their Swedish. The entry-level jobs ("instegsjobb") led to the so-called new-start jobs ("nystartsjobb") in a year in the service of Örebro Naturskola and Örebro KomTek. Anna Ekblom, the head of operations, is now looking for funds for Adil and Antonios so that they can continue working. According to her there's a need for more guides like them. The demand is great and they are fully employed.

– It has been wonderful to work with this. So far we have had over a hundred guided tours with a total of 2,000 visitors from all over the world. For example there have been SFI students, nature enthusiast from Örebro, young people, unaccompanied minors and children and families who we got to know with the help of family centers, says Adil Sadiku.

#### **4.4.2**     *Reaching for new audiences*

Conditions for guided tours in Örebro are good and it is easy to access nature in all residential areas. The possibility to follow a guide who speaks the same language has opened nature for people from other countries, as well as for people who live close to the natural areas, but never before thought to visit them.

– One of our participants had lived in this one neighborhood for 20 years. It is 50 meters from a beautiful forest, but he never went there. "Why would I do that?" "May I?" That's how he reasoned before, but we got him to take the first step. That is fantastic, says Kajsa.

In general Nature Conservation in Örebro County has had difficulties attracting immigrants to the open tours. Kajsa Grebäck's advice is to contact directly different groups with targeted invitations to give people easier access. It could be e.g. SFI students or unaccompanied refugee children.

– We have done both. In the beginning we advertised a lot and at first only Swedes showed up. Now people know about us. As the word spreads, more and more people

become interested. Then they take along their friends. You have to find some key persons and soon enough they start to appear on the open tours, says Kajsa.

#### **4.4.3 Cultural differences in the nature relationship**

In their work they have discovered large cultural differences in the experiences people have of nature and how they look at it. In Sweden lot of people use nature for recreation and relaxation. In some parts of the world nature means snipers, grenades, poisonous plants and venomous animals, and perhaps a place where you throw the garbage. Thus, there is much to be told about the Swedish context. – We explain that it is actually our forest, everyone’s forest. Therefore, we must take care of it, says Anna Ekblom.

Adil and Antonios tell everything about everyman’s rights and sometimes they even have specific tours focusing on that particular theme. Adil tends to emphasize that the nature in Sweden is free but many do not believe him.

It happens that the participants on the tours do not always ask when they don’t understand, but instead begin to whisper to each other. When you lead a group of people from different cultures it becomes clear they associate in different ways. For example when Adil and Antonio together with Kajsa took a group along to a red marked trail, many were reluctant because they interpreted the red markings as “forbidden land”. – There’s so much you do not think about. “Immigrants” are not a homogeneous group. Just as when working with groups in general it is important to be open, sensitive, humble and build on participants’ knowledge and experience, says Kajsa Grebäck.

#### **4.4.4 Wide range of long-term cooperation**

Confidence in nature activities as a great way to work on integration has been further strengthened during the project. Adil says that it does not have to be that sophisticated.– Get in touch and invite different local groups. It means a lot just to be out together. Nature is important to many Swedes, so for us who were not born here, it is an important way into the society. And I feel I have an important task to spread the knowledge of nature to more people.

The results have exceeded expectations and, thanks to the project, a long-term and in-depth cooperation has developed between the municipality and various non-profit organizations. Kajsa Grebäck underlines the importance of thinking long-term and cooperating broadly, not in an isolated group.

Figure 19: The project “Ute tillsammans” (“Outdoors together”) is another result of the broad collaboration between actors in Örebro County



Photo: The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation in Örebro County.

## 4.5 Norway: Nature-based integration in Norway

*Hogne Øian and Olve Krange, The Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norway, Elisabeth Sem Christensen, City of Oslo, Department of Urban Development, Norway*

### 4.5.1 *Research on immigrants and outdoor recreation*

When people engage along several dimensions with nature environments that surround them on a daily basis, it may contribute to health and wellbeing as well as to the development of sense of place and place attachment (Peters *et al.* 2016; Bennet 2014; Darrien & Stokowski 2014; Williams 2002). It is also believed that it will enhance peoples' identification with nature, providing public support for conservation measures and motivation for environmentally friendly behaviour (Soga & Gaston 2016).

Recently, research has demonstrated that immigrants of non-European countries are less likely to take part in outdoor recreation and their ways of relating to and

engaging with nature differs from the majority of the population (see e.g. Askins 2009; Figari *et al.* 2009; Buijs *et al.* 2009; Peters 2010; Gentin 2011; Kloek 2013). In particular, when it comes to immigrants of Asian or African origins, cultural (and religious) imaginations and definitions of nature and culturally established ways of engaging with green spaces and nature can differ significantly from the dominant or hegemonic equivalents among the native population (Byrne 2011; Kloek *et al.* 2013; Wolch *et al.* 2014). Immigrants from African and Asian countries are more inclined to value nature in terms of its functional-material benefits, while the aesthetical elements that dominates the typical modern, romantic relation to nature are less present (Jay & Schraml 2009). It has also been emphasised that people who originate from these two continents are more likely to prefer “passive” recreational activities, such as picnicking, resting and relaxing (see e.g. Özgüner 2011). Moreover, studies from various countries on landscape preferences have shown that immigrants tend to prefer managed and developed sites over wilderness landscapes (Buijs *et al.* 2009; Kloek 2013; Gentin 2011; Peters 2010; Figari *et al.* 2009). What kinds of experiences people want to achieve by engaging with the outdoors may, hence, vary considerably.

This research is still in its infancy, despite the fact that migrant populations have been substantial for decades. Some of the research has also focused on various constraints, such as governmental recreation policies, types of natures and social environments and forms of racial or ethnic discrimination. Less attention have been given to how constraints on participation depend on socio-economic status, gender, religious affiliations, and cultural and geographical origin (Kränge & Bjerke 2011).

Some scholars (see e.g. Kloek *et al.* 2013; Rishbeth & Finney. 2006; Figari *et al.* 2009) have highlighted the implication of the fact that immigrants tend to be less familiar with and knowledgeable of the different elements typical for nature of the host country. People may, hence, feel some kind of estrangement from nature and green spaces, as it is perceived as unknown landscapes that contain several more or less unknown dangers (such as spirits, snakes, dogs, violent humans etc.; Risbeth & Finney 2006). Moreover, since specific outdoor practices, as well as particular landscapes or green spaces, tend to be associated with particular identities, the feeling of estrangement may also occur on the level of identities (Shinew *et al.* 2006; Kloek *et al.* 2013).

An additional aspect is that participation in outdoor recreation sometimes is marked by social dilemmas and conflicts, such as when it violates the cultural and religious moralities of one’s parents (Kay 2005) or challenges stereotypes the majority holds with regard to minority groups’ cultural and social abilities and interests (Askins



2009; King & Church 2013). While certain forms of or locations for outdoor recreation can take on the role as markers of ethnic identities (see Shinew *et al.* 2006), specific outdoor recreation practices can subsequently also function as a way of cultural resistance (Shinew *et al.* 2004). These kinds of social factors may in addition to the cultural factors, contribute to feelings of alienation or estrangement from dominant native outdoor practices, the particularities of Norwegian natures and the ways green environments are structured in urban areas. In a Norwegian context, the seasonal variations may also imply particular challenges, not the least with concern to low temperatures and ice and snow during winter.

As demonstrated by Peters (2010), Buijs *et al.* (2009) and Kloek (2013), there are dynamic relationships between peoples' outdoor practices and their different dimensions of identities. While generation, education level and gender probably could explain some of the variances, the ways in which people identify themselves, as Muslim, as Pakistani, as Norwegian-Pakistani, or as primarily Norwegian, might also influence peoples' outdoor practices considerably. We should therefore avoid presenting a static picture of variations in present outdoor practices among people of immigrant background.

The tendencies of immigrants to prefer spending time outdoors in parks, often in connection with social gathering or events, are well demonstrated in much research (see e.g. Figari *et al.* 2009; Gentin 2011; Peters 2010; Özgüner 2011; Kloek 2013). Research goals should nevertheless be to discern patterns of variations without making a priori assumptions on the ground of cultural and geographical origin, and to discuss development trends with respect to outdoor practices and needs in term of city planning and urban outdoor recreation policies. Rather than identifying specific outdoor recreation practices (or apparent lack thereof) as attributes of specific ethnic groups or people of similar cultural and geographical background, research projects should include the aim of discovering variations and emerging trends.

To understand why people are using nature in the ways they do is important. Identification of types of activities and constraints and roads to recruitment and motivation should therefore be followed by research that also pays attention to how people engage with nature in terms of intersubjective experiences, cultural meaning systems and social identities (Kloek *et al.* 2013; Jay & Schraml 2014). Exploring how people make sense of places where they live or spend much time is relevant to understand the ways in which people interact with their environment in general and green spaces in particular, and how this interaction may become more sustainable and in turn eventually develop place attachments (Low *et al.* 2009). These kinds of

processes include more than emotional and cognitive experience, as even cultural beliefs and practices, as well as social identities and power relations, are involved. As past experiences shape current perceptions, memories and places are deeply entwined (Jackson, 1994). For immigrants, numerous factors may thus influence relationships to a place, such as length of residency, previous residences, community mobility, cultural or political ideas of what “home” and “community” is or should be (Hummon 1992), as well as varying levels of rootedness and feelings of exclusion and loss (Stokowski 2002).

#### **4.5.2**     *Some aspects of outdoor recreation and the participation of immigrant in Norway*

Based on the assumption that outdoor recreation represents a gateway both to better physical and mental health as and social integration in general, several NGOs have during recent years initiated different kinds of projects with the aim of introducing immigrants into how to engage with Norwegian nature and climate and how to take part in Norwegian outdoor recreation practices. In terms of research, no comprehensive overview or evaluation exist concerning the scale and content of these projects. What follows below is hence a short and incomplete description of more or less random choice of projects.

#### **4.5.3**     *The National Trekker Association (DNT) and the Norwegian Red Cross*

In cooperation with the Governmental Agency for Integration and Diversity (IMDi), The National Trekker Association (DNT) has, for instance, recently established the project “A multicultural DNT” aiming at the inclusion of refugees and immigrants in local DNT activities. The main aim of the project is to stimulate their numerous local branches to local initiatives and events that are suitable for recruiting refugees and immigrants to take part in outdoor recreation. While recognizing that most immigrants are unfamiliar with both Norwegian nature and climate and Norwegian outdoor recreation practices, in 2015 DNT developed in collaboration with several NGOs information material on outdoor recreation opportunities and events which did not presuppose the foreknowledge most Norwegian possess.

One particular event has received quite a lot of attention in the media: "Til topps!" (all the way to the mountain peak!), a project inviting people of immigrant background (for the most part refugees) to join members of the NGOs to climb the country's highest peak, Galdhøpiggen. Since 2006, Norwegian Red Cross has organized this event in collaboration with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), the employer organization of Norwegian municipalities and (KS) and The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT). The number of participants has increased constantly, and as of 2016 nearly 10,000 had taken part since 2006. The event is based on the formation of local hiking groups throughout the country. While training for the Galdhøpiggen-event by hiking in local and gradually more demanding mountain terrain, the groups and the activities are intended to create a space for interaction between Norwegians and immigrants, and to introduce immigrants to Norwegian climate and nature and to Norwegian outdoor recreation practices. In addition, the Red Cross has contacted several reception centres for asylum seekers and invites in collaboration with different NGO asylum seekers to take part in walks in nearby nature areas. Besides offering meaningful and healthy pastime, the intention is to introduce the participants to Norwegian culture and love of walking.

### **Inter-municipal outdoor boards**

During the latter year, inter-municipal outdoor boards have initiated several projects throughout the country in response to funding from the government aimed at immigrant children and youth. The main tasks of the in total 25 Inter-municipal Outdoor Recreation Boards throughout the country is to secure outdoor recreation opportunities of citizens by advising the municipalities on spatial planning, facilitating for outdoor recreation by maintaining car parks, trails and picnic areas and providing information boards and signposts. Moreover, some outdoor boards organize hiking in forests and mountains, and offer learning programs for kindergarten and schools. Recently, there has also been a significant increase in the councils' efforts of integrating immigrants into outdoor life practices. Recently, the National Association of Inter-municipal Outdoor Recreation Boards advised the government to make Norwegian outdoor recreation practices a substantial part of the introductory program for immigrants. Acknowledging the need to provide new citizens with knowledge of how to engage with Norwegian nature and climate, the advice is in addition based on the assumption that outdoor recreation represents an area for learning about Norwegian traditions and culture in less formal settings than schools and work places.

Below there are a few short descriptions of some of the programs initiated by various outdoor boards in recent years:

- The regional outdoor board of Midt-Agder invited in collaboration with the Adult Education Centre for Refugees (Voksenopplæringen) students and their families to take part in organized outings to recreation areas in the outskirts of towns and cities of the region. While acknowledging differences in how people from various parts of the world relates to nature and outdoor recreation, a program of 15 different walking events was carefully planned based on former experiences with similar projects and in dialogue with some of the students. One central aim was to motivate people to recreate in the outdoors because of the health effects. A second goal was to provide opportunities to learn about how to engage with nature environments in Norway and about Norwegian outdoor recreation practices and traditions.
- The outdoor board of the Oslo region has established training programs for youth who aspired to be a guide or an instructor during outdoor events organized for children with minority background. The outdoor board of Vesterålen in Nordland County organized a summer activity camp for youths of minority background. During one week in summer, refugees took part in canoeing, climbing, archery, sea rafting and tower building games, in addition to traditional activities such as fishing and hiking. The aim is primarily to introduce youths to outdoor activities. The outdoor board of Vesterålen also organizes outdoor recreation weeklong camps for refugee families. In addition to activities such as fishing, climbing, canoeing, the refugees are introduced to basic knowledge about how one engages with the Norwegian nature in terms of clothing, the use of map and compass etc.
- The outdoor board of the Western Norway organizes different events with outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking, fishing, kayaking, rowing, bonfires and barbecues. The annual number of participants usually exceeds hundred. The outdoor board Dalene have during some years collaborated extensively with local and regional branches of NGOs and municipalities in inviting participants from asylum reception centres and from the Adult Education Centre for Refugees (Voksenopplæringen) to take part in organized activities such as hiking, canoeing, mushroom picking and cooking on camp fire in nearby nature areas.

#### 4.5.4 *The Grorud Valley Programme – sustainable development and social inclusion in Oslo*

Outdoor spaces and green structures tend to be designed with dominant practices and needs of the majority population in mind. In areas with a socially and culturally heterogeneous population, there is a need to design urban outdoor spaces in ways that reflect a wide range of experiences and practices (Risbeth 2001; Byrne *et al.* 2009; Leikkilä *et al.* 2013; Byrne *et al.* 2014; Jay & Schramel 2014; Rutt & Gulsrud 2016). It is accordingly crucial that research, planning and management of green structures clearly address social and cultural variations and dynamics within the population (Botzat *et al.* 2016; Özgüner 2011; Chiesura 2004).

While there are reasons to believe that cultural and geographical origin influence how people experience and benefit from nature and green structures, we should avoid taking for granted that groups with different migrant backgrounds (e.g. people with a Somali identity, Muslims or those who consider themselves primarily as Norwegian-Pakistani) as homogenous groups. People relate to these kinds of identities in various ways,<sup>4</sup> partly because the relevance and meaning content of identity labels varies both with social contexts and personal life experiences, and because such dimensions as levels of education, income, political affiliation and religious commitments makes them dynamic entities.

#### **Key information**

The Grorud Valley covers the North Eastern parts of Oslo, with approx. 140,000 residents out of 650,000. The valley floor consists of commercial activities and infrastructure, highways and cargo industries, while the housing properties are located hillside, close to the surrounding woods and surrounded by many green structures. These suburbs were mainly built in the 50s, 60s and 70s. The standard of the housing is good, and there is a well-functioning public transport system.

Near 50 percent of the inhabitants of this valley are immigrants or have immigrant background (the concept in Norwegian context refers to first generation immigrants

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<sup>4</sup> The official definition (SSB) of an immigrant in Norway extends to individuals born in Norway of two foreign-born parents. Applying this definition in this project would violate our aim to explore variations and dynamics in outdoor practices, which requires that we relate to peoples identities more than formal statuses. In other words, a person with only one foreign-born parent, or who wears the status of third generation migrant, might be strongly attached to identities she shares with first generation migrants (or be identified as such by others).

and their Norwegian-born children). In some local areas, approx. 70 percent of the inhabitants belong to one of these two categories. While one third of the immigrant population is born in Norway, the rest are born in one of 170 different countries throughout the world. The immigrants have in average lower income and poorer living conditions compared with the rest of the population. Yet, the living conditions vary within the immigrant population, as they vary among the non-immigrants.

### **The Grorud Valley Integrated Urban Regeneration Project**

The Grorud Valley Integrated Urban Regeneration Programme (Goruddalssatsingen) lasted from 2007 until 2016, and is to be continued for ten more years, though within new frames and with new goals and organization. In the final evaluation (Stenstadvold 2016) it is concluded that the program has been a success. More than 300 different projects have been implemented under this NOK 1.5 billion program. This includes refurbishing of parks and hiking trails, kindergartens free of charge for 4 and 5 year olds, projects related to improving public health, education and support of voluntary initiatives. Approx. 35 public agencies have been involved, in addition to several NGOs, individual citizens and various local partners.

### **Green-blue goals and projects**

An important part of the programme has been to develop the green infrastructure and combine the green and the blue (a river runs through the valley), interconnect green spots throughout the valley, and making it easier to bike or walk across the valley. Another important task has been to open up creeks and small rivers, which for the past 50 years have run in pipelines underground. The water changes the landscape, stimulates wildlife and birds, and makes the local communities more friendly and inviting. According to the programme evaluation, the greatest and most positive changes have been in the areas considered the most deprived. The working method in these areas has been concentrated and holistic, and the method is referred to as "local area based development". Citizen involvement in planning is part of the method, and local needs and wishes have been mapped. This is supposed to have a positive impact on the inhabitants' engagement with outdoors where they live.

Looking back, one can see that the programme de facto has encouraged physical activities and outdoor life for both children and adults. However, the final evaluation has not been able to measure whether outdoor life has increased or not. On the other

hand, a local evaluation from one of the eight different local projects indicates that physical activities in the neighbourhood have increased:

“We also find that attitudes have changed, indicated by an increasing number of women with immigrant background, hiking in the forest. The forest was formerly considered dangerous. Others reasons to success is more information to the residents about outdoor qualities and possibilities close to residential areas” (Ruud *et al.* 2016:7, our translation).

The programme has also benefited from interaction effects between various welfare and health schemes. For instance, one public health project has focused on pregnant women who are the risk zone of diabetes 2, while two additional target groups have been children in kindergartens, and their families, and children with overweight and their families. These projects have, among others, introduced children and adults to the local surroundings as recreational areas, and taken new parks into use for festivals and social events, in order to make people familiar with the possibilities the upgraded greeneries represent:

“Children in kindergartens and their families get increased focus on healthy nutrition [sunt kosthold] and the families start using the physical surroundings in new manners (...).It is more activity in the local park since it was refurbished, the outdoor exercise facilities are used also in the children’s spare time, and skiing and skating events have gradually become more and more popular among families with immigrant background. Free hire and information about sport equipment has made it easier to participate.” (Ruud *et al.* 2016:7, our translation).

Other projects have encouraged youth to take part in sport clubs, different kinds of NGOs and local events, and contributed to the emergence of a new generation of volunteers. These young people with families from all over the world contribute considerably to the local civic society. Young people from “Alnaskolen for unge ledere” (The Alna training for young leaders) are e.g. important partners on the local “Get outdoor- day” in the highly multicultural community of Furuset (residents of more than 140 national backgrounds).

Figure 20: "Get outdoors-day" at Furuset



Photo: Elisabeth Sem Christensen.

### District parks

Four district parks and new hiking and cycling trails close to residential areas are considered to be of great importance to the distribution of outdoor recreation opportunities among the socially and culturally heterogeneous population. The parks are the result of new insights gained during the programme period: In order to be taken into use by all groups of inhabitants, outdoor facilities need to be easily available and experienced as safe. A research report showing that a group of women from Asia and the Middle East preferred to walk to the nearby IKEA shopping centre, or going by car to parks central in Oslo, instead of hiking in the Oslo- forests next to where they lived (Figari *et al.* 2009), represented an eye-opener in this respect. In all areas where citizens have been involved in planning of physical outdoor qualities, streetlights and lighting has been an important issue. People need to feel safe to



enjoy outdoor life. In one area, this led to conflict with nature-based organizations, to whom the greatest concern was that streetlights would disturb fish in the rivers, insects and birds. After a couple of years arguing back and forth, solutions that take in account both human beings and animals were found.

#### 4.5.5 *Concluding remarks*

In Norway, there are still hegemonic understandings that tend to delimit the notion of outdoor recreation (*friluftsliv*) to traditional activities taking place in wilderness areas, such as cross-country skiing, forest trips and mountain hiking. People of immigrant background only occasionally engage in such activities (Krange & Strandbu, 2004). Until recently, outdoor recreation policies in term of planning, facilitation and encouragement of the population to participate have relied heavily on this hegemonic understanding (Flemsæther, 2014). This, in combination with the fact that immigrants are less inclined to participate in quantitative studies, could explain why research-based knowledge about how immigrants spend time outdoors on more general basis is lacking. Based on the random examples above, it seem like the aims of some NGO projects largely are directed at integrating immigrants into what is perceived as proper outdoor recreation in terms of hegemonic definitions. On the one hand, this might be seen as fruitful path in the sense that it gives immigrants the opportunity to take part in activities and social arenas that is seen by many as a significant part of what defines Norwegianness (see e.g Gullestad 1990, 2006; Witoszek, 1991). On the other hand, the projects could have been more attuned to the assumed preferences of immigrants based on their former experiences with the outdoors and natures, and with their culturally informed understandings of nature environments. The Grorud Valley seems to be rather unique in this picture, as it clearly represents an example of the latter. However, there are some indications of improvements as some NGOs recently recruited people with immigrant background into the design and management of their outdoor projects. There are moreover some indication of increased cooperation between immigrant NGOs and outdoor recreation NGOs.

## 4.6 Finland: ESIKOTO project

*Saša Dolinšek and Saara Airaksinen, Parks & Wildlife Finland, Metsähallitus, Finland*

ESIKOTO project (2016–2018, <http://www.metsa.fi/esikoto>) is one of the rare projects in Finland funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) where focus group are asylum seekers and persons who recently received residence permit. Funding for the project comes from the priority goal 5 of the ESF which aims at strengthening social inclusion and preventing poverty. The main aim of the ESIKOTO project is to involve this group of people in meaningful activities which promote integration and enhance bonding with the rest of the society, as well as prevent institutionalization. Meaningful activity can mean such which aims directly at asylum seekers, but the purpose in this project is more to guide them to find existing activities in which they can participate in the same way as other members of the society. Particular focus is on the asylum seekers' engagement in planning of activities, as well as active participation.

**Figure 21:** By the campfire at Koitelinkoski, Kiiminki



Photo: Wasim Khuzam.

Resources of the reception centres are usually enough to only meet the basic needs such as living and food, but also language, social and cultural skills teaching. However, asylum seekers, of whom many will become local residents, need in addition to engagement in hobbies also preparations for stepping into the world of work (Vastaanottokeskukset ja niiden palvelut 2016).

Pre-integration period is currently not utilized as effectively as possible and participation of the asylum seekers in the society is low. Their role has been largely passive and opportunities for participation are almost non-existing, or not enough information about these is available (Enoranta 2007). By systematically modelling the pre-integration process regionally and by developing opportunities, tools, materials and know-how, it is possible to achieve more efficient pre-integration process for asylum seekers, as well as for the Finnish society.

ESIKOTO project aims at close cooperation with the voluntary sector, especially in the organization of activities but also in the development of sustainable operating models. As part of the project, a network of voluntary sector organizations will be put together, and within the network common knowledge is shared and also tools, methods and materials are developed and distributed. The voluntary sector organisations in the network, especially those who have not previously worked with asylum seekers, are able to participate in training courses and workshops, helping them to enhance their skills needed in the pre-integration work. All these are organised by the project.

Parks and Wildlife Finland is a state-owned organization whose work includes nature conservation; providing of facilities and services for outdoor recreation as well as hunting and fishing services; and protected area management planning (Parks & Wildlife Finland 2016). It is one of the four partners in ESIKOTO project, with special focus on nature-based integration. Other three partners in the project represent a variety of stakeholders with many years of experience in working with immigrants.

Nature plays an important role in the leisure activities of Finnish people and is a crucial part of the Finnish culture as well as livelihood. Research shows that 96 per cent of the Finnish adult population engage in outdoor activities on an average of 2–3 times a week. About 43 percent of Finns make one or several nature trips per year. According to research, different green environments affect positively mental health and well-being of Finns (Sievänen & Neuvonen 2011). Being out in the nature reduces stress and anxiety and improves person's mood (Kaikkonen *et al.* 2014). Activities in nature also strengthen social relations meaning that it may be easier to encounter strangers in natural environment, and it can be easier for Finns to approach immigrants in nature

and during outdoor activities. Moreover, outdoor activities can release asylum seekers' from the often too distressing interiors of the reception centres.

Finnish nature is mostly unfamiliar to asylum seekers and can be as well a place of fear. However, nature can play an important role in the quality of life of asylum seekers. Moreover, it can be a crucial part in the pre-integration process, enhancing understanding of Finnish culture and human-nature relationship; improving one's own well-being; or increasing knowledge about livelihood connected to nature. Nevertheless, there is a long way for the asylum seekers to independently go outdoors, and therefore experience is needed as well as tools and knowledge of how asylum seekers' needs and the integrational role of nature encounters. The creation of the tools requires genuine joint planning between asylum seekers and professionals. People who work closely with asylum seekers as well as voluntary sector actors need best practices tools to facilitate their work with asylum seekers and other immigrants. These tools can at the same time cater for successful social integration.

Taking all this into account, the main objective of Parks and Wildlife Finland in the ESIKOTO project is to identify ways of how natural environment can play an active role in the pre-integration process. During the two-year long project this is going to be achieved by increasing the awareness of health and well-being impacts of natural environment among asylum seekers, professionals and voluntary organisation members; by organising outdoor activities together with the voluntary sector and framing the best performing practices into a tool to be used by professionals; by producing the information package about Finnish nature which is to be used by asylum seekers in order to benefit from natural environment while waiting for the residence permit decision; and by encounters between asylum seekers and other members of the society.

ESIKOTO project's main focus group are asylum seekers from five different reception centres within Northern-Ostrobothnia region – three in Oulu, one in Pudasjärvi and one in Kuusamo. Three months have passed since the launch of the project, therefore to this date only few nature-based activities have been implemented. However, knowledge gained from these is important for the planning and implementation of the future actions. Parks and Wildlife Finland has previously successfully implemented two other projects, namely AIR and Luonto liikuttamaan, in which one of the focus groups were also immigrants. Best practices from these previous projects are and will be taken into account also in ESIKOTO project. In the AIR project, several nature trips were organised and the outcomes are a good basis for organisation of trips in the ongoing ESIKOTO project (Luontopäivät hyvinvointia... 2014). On the

other hand, in Luonto liikuttamaan project, a guide for learning and well-being in nature was put together and is to be used by those mostly working with youngsters (Luonto liikuttamaan... 2015). The guide will be utilized in the making of the tool for professionals, one of the planned outcomes in ESIKOTO project.

Feedback collected from one of the nature trips organised in October 2016 showed that the biggest gap is the weather, especially coldness. Pre-information about activities given to participants is of crucial importance even though it seems that such information is usually insufficient. For participants it is hard to estimate what to expect, especially when it comes to clothing and activities. According to participants, they enjoyed the trip outdoors but many of them prefer activities indoors. Especially during cold winter months. Those with children say that they do not visit nature places because it is hard to move around.

**Figure 22: Nature trip to Rokua National Park**



Photo: Saša Dolinšek.

Starting point in the ESIKOTO project was an assessment of skills, needs and wants of the asylum seekers, to see what kind of activities they are interested in, and therefore makes sense to organise. To get this valuable information, workshops with asylum seekers were organised. Language barriers were overcome with the help of other immigrants who worked in workshops as non-official interpreters. In addition, a questionnaire was sent to those who work in reception centres. Results of both assessments show that nature and nature-based activities are something that is really missing in the everyday life of asylum seekers and more outdoor activities and nature trips are something that they find important and long for. Many participants in the workshops come from countryside and have established a relationship to nature, so they have strong desire to connect with Finnish nature but have certain fears and are uncertain about going outdoors independently. Thus, they long for more information. Involved in the workshops were mostly young men, who are the biggest group among asylum seekers in reception centres, but also women. The biggest percentage of participants speaks Arabic, Somalia or Dari language (Assessment of skills ... 2016).

Workshops were a good way to collect this valuable information even though participants were at first a bit sceptical about answering to questions – they have been answering to many questionnaires presented by governmental officials. But when they got to see that this is really beneficial for them and for those who are still to come, they were very pleased to tell their opinions and needs. Themes covered during the workshops were in addition to nature also culture, health and well-being, and Finnish society. One crucial thing that probably affected workshop atmosphere were denied residence permit applications and therefore poor mental well-being, as well as for many long-term housing in reception centres with low possibility for privacy. The information gained will be incorporated into project activities and operations.

By connecting voluntary sector and asylum seekers, ESIKOTO project aims also at sustainability, meaning that perceived functional practices are meant to be continued also after the project ends. Important aspect of ESIKOTO project is to build trust between local community and asylum seekers, since this is the only way to build a society that appreciate difference and make use of other perspectives than those so deep-rooted in it. Nature in many ways defines Finnish identity and whoever settles in Finland should understand that, and also make use of nature for their own well-being.

## 4.7 Finland: Green Gate – nature integration

*Tuomo Salovuori, Project manager, Green Gate – project, Sininauhaliitto, Finland*

Blue Ribbon organization (Sininauhaliitto), a member organization of the International Federation of the Blue Cross, began the development of Green Care activities for the needs of social and health organizations in 2011 (<http://www.vihreaveraja-hanke.fi/>). The operation activities were fishing and wilderness activities, therapeutic gardening, the use of farms and animals, as well as nature oriented manual skills. Some of the activities took place in the supported housing units, and already during the first years immigrants were involved in some activity groups. We soon realized that we must develop our operations to meet their needs.

We started pilot activities with the Helsinki Vieraskoti housing family unit, which accommodated a dozen of immigrant families. Soon we were joined by a student also interested in the subject, Heidi Backman, who started to plan suitable functional activity for immigrant families in different seasons. We interviewed the families with the assistance of an interpreter and tried to identify their wishes and ideas on nature activities. We tried a variety of nature activities with the families living in the family unit and documented the experiences. Heidi Backman covered the topic in her Bachelor's thesis for Applied Science studies in 2013.

Figure 23: Planning nature-based activities with an immigrant group



Photo: Green gate project.



In the same year started our collaboration with Kantti ry, a social sector association specializing in housing and care services, in a project Jade. Elderly Somali women were involved in their activities. We continued to accumulate experiences and were accompanied by two new students who wanted to do their thesis about the nature integration theme. They continued the practical activities using the operational model designed earlier by Heidi Backman and also came up with new activities. Farming activities continued, Somali women visited a farm, baked rye bread, went fishing and mushroom picking and visited nature sites in Helsinki area. We found out that particularly all the activity related to food was interesting and meaningful to them. A lot of pictures were taken of our male instructor cooking fish at the campfire and the women made sure to tell at home that in Finland also men cook.

**Figure 24: Fishing together**



Photo: Green gate project.

This time we had an employee with Somali background involved in all the activities, which was a great help in communication. We also learned a lot about the Somali culture and the religious norms and came to understand that the concept of nature is a very culturally-bound phenomenon. The concept of nature-based integration was established in our use. The thesis was completed and the case received a proper attention as a new social innovation.

Students recorded the entire process and it can also be found online (see <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/82290>). In the conclusions, Tanja and Iina state that nature based integration seems to be a well suited instrument for integration work. Physical and mental well-being of the participants had improved during the project and the nature activities had increased interaction of the Somali and Finnish population.

Recently, Finland received an influx of more than 30,000 refugees, most of them from countries and cultures whose perceptions of nature were quite unknown to us. Concurrently we took part in the project ORIGIN managed by Finnish Environment Institute, which made possible to exchange experiences with Nordic partners. In this way we were able to create a network of other Finnish actors who had organized similar activities.

We decided to continue with nature-based integration and conduct research on the experiences and achievements of other actors and academics considering e.g. the perceptions of nature among the Iraqi and Afghan population. A social work student Anna Holi had been working at a reception center and joined us for a few months to do an internship. She collected material about the experiences of other European actors' nature activities related to immigrants. Her 40 page report gave us a good overview of the subject and our intention was to use this in a possible follow-up project.

Figure 25: Barbeque in the spring nature



Photo: Green gate project.

Next we wanted to identify what kind of nature activities the people arriving in Finland would like to take part in. We prepared a simple questionnaire in which we used photographs to describe different nature activities. We asked about the respondent's prior experiences and the potential interest in about ten different nature activities. We asked for feedback of the questionnaire from other actors and after numerous corrections we directed the inquiries to various immigrant groups. Our employees accompanied the respondents and sometimes there were also interpreters involved in filling in the questionnaires.

However, answering to the questionnaire proved to be more difficult than we had anticipated. Immigrants had difficulties to understand some of the issues and because they only had experience of few of the activities mentioned in the questionnaire the answers were varied. Although we gained some information about immigrants'

interests, we concluded that it is better to ask preferences after the migrants have actual experience of the activities. Otherwise the risk of misunderstanding is possible and a simple questionnaire can't give us information about immigrants' hopes and wishes. Naturally, it's quite difficult to assess something when you lack the experience.

At the moment we are considering an application for a project associated with the nature based integration. Blue Ribbon already has a project related to supporting the housing of immigrants and nature activities could connect to this in some way. Networking with other actors has been important and we hope it continues to be so in the future when developing the activities.

## **4.8 Finland: Nature-based immigration integration in Suomen Latu – The Outdoor Association of Finland**

*Helena Kempas, Suomen Latu – The Outdoor Association of Finland, Finland*

### **4.8.1 Background**

Suomen Latu – the Outdoor Association of Finland is a non-profit organization with over 83,000 members in 199 member associations. We want people to have access to outdoor recreation, in spite of age, background or personal basis.

Our vision is that everyone can find a meaningful way to engage in outdoor recreational activities and to be able to enjoy nature.

The influx of immigrants to Finland in 2015 was more than 30,000 people. The attitudes towards immigration within the member associations of Suomen Latu reflect the general situation in Finland: both friendly and opposing opinions can be found. Suomen Latu carried out a survey concerning the immigrant activities among the member associations in 2014 and afterwards communicated actively to the member associations about the immigration work. Nature-based integration activities have been arranged for the people with immigrant background and the asylum seekers living in the refugee reception centers. The goals for the activities organized by the member associations have been:

- to act in accordance with the vision of Suomen Latu, adding the universal idea to provide activities and build well-being through exercise

- to engage immigrants in outdoor exercise and introduce them to the Finnish outdoors, nature and culture
- to give the members of the association a chance to get to know the immigrant population
- to create positive publicity and to grow the member base in the future.

Nature-based activities have consisted of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, forest hiking, disc golf, clearing the walking trails, picking berries and mushrooms, rowing, geocaching, biking, bowling and all-round traditional Finnish summer cottage life (sauna, swimming, grilling sausages, yard games). In addition, Suomen Latu is a partner in operation of the International Ski School of Finland, established in 2015 in order to help immigrant children adapt to Finland's long and harsh winters.

Examples of the activities among immigrants in some of the member associations:

- Espoon Latu: Information on the activities in English. Co-operation with international companies, Aalto University and ethnic associations.
- Vaasan Latu: Bicycle riding lessons for school children in the spring of 2016. Activities are to be continued.
- Tiirismaan Latu: Ski school and summer day event attended by plenty of enthusiastic immigrants.

Activities with the reception centers:

- A query directed to the Suomen Latu member associations in the autumn of 2015 considering voluntary work in reception centers did not get people interested. In the same autumn the call for funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture for organizing exercise activities for immigrants, which was notified by Suomen Latu to the member associations in the reception center areas. The grant was applied for and was received by one of the local associations in Southern Finland, Kotkan Latu, i.e. the activities were carried out fairly quickly in reaction to the situation.
- Kotkan Latu designed a project in which activities were organized 1–2 times per month, 2–3 hours per day with different themes. Reception center staff organized transportation to the association's lodge or other site of activity for willing

participants which there was 10–40 per activity session. Guidance was provided by 3–6 association volunteers per session. The programme consisted of presentations of various sports, firsthand experimentation and some refreshments for the participants.

- Espoon Latu is organizing a monthly exercise for the reception center residents with different themes. Number of participants varies depending on the weather and on the day's theme.

**Figure 26: Outdoor activities with immigrant children**



Photo: Suomen Latu.

#### 4.8.2 *Pros and cons of the activities*

##### **Pros**

- Success requires at least one enthusiastic association responsible for the operation.
- The participants have been kind to take part in each event and the atmosphere has been cheerful in general.
- Participants have become familiar with the Finnish forest nature.
- New and strange sporting activities have been tried with an open mind.
- Concept and facts of everyman's rights are made known.
- Learning the Finnish language out in the nature.
- Some asylum seekers have also participated in other sport activities of the association.

##### **Cons**

- Participants' outdoor gear is often insufficient and inappropriate for the exercise.
- Lack of language skills complicates understanding of the principles and rules (e.g. disc golf) and technics (e.g. cross-country skiing, snowshoeing) of sporting activities.
- Group sizes are sometimes too big for given activities.
- A heterogeneous group sets challenges for operation: families with little children, young people and adults.
- Different ethnic groups don't always socialize with each other.

##### **Reception center operation**

Operating with reception centers has not always been fluent and efficient, since the employee resources are very limited. Wishes of participants were not clear in advance and therefore the activity was organized based on the association's conditions and opportunities, approved by the management of the reception center. Volunteers and reception center staff did not coordinate in sufficient detail the course of the event before the operation and systematic feedback from the participants was not collected afterwards. The event was estimated to be a success concluding from the acknowledgments of participants, happy faces and enjoyment of the activities. Event

offered a relaxing change for the often stressful life in the reception centers and clearing the sports ground for further use gave asylum seekers a meaningful sense of work and responsibility.

Figure 27: Playing disc-golf



Photo: Suomen Latu.

### 4.8.3 *Lessons learned*

Nature is a good tool for contributing to the integration of immigrants and outdoor exercise can also be implemented with limited arrangements and means. Our model is feasible in every willing association. The action should be planned in cooperation with the organizing association, reception center or with other immigrant communities and participants. Foreign language information about the activity on various channels should be emphasized. A way of communicating should be solved together with the participants involved. Volunteers need basic information of the participants as e.g. the number of participants affects the organizing of the operation. Activity is preferably organized for one homogeneous group at a time, as e.g. the interests and capabilities



of the girls, boys, older men and mothers are different. Volunteers need also an introduction to the different cultural backgrounds before the activity is planned and the event organized.

Suomen Latu compiles the received experiences and participants, communicates the results, reserves resources and in the future encourages new associations to organize similar activities locally. The future aspiration is that those receiving asylum and immigrants in general will find their way to the activities of the Suomen Latu member associations or even advance to official positions in the association themselves.

Figure 28: Grilling sausages



Photo: Suomen Latu.



# Conclusions

The increasing importance of immigrants, not least due to the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees, in Nordic countries demands new types of solutions for their successful integration. The ORIGIN project set out to get an overview of what we know of the role of nature in the lives of the immigrants and how nature and outdoor recreation are used to facilitate the immigrants' integration in Nordic countries. The results of the project illustrate that throughout Nordic countries, a number of projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration, but information and experiences gathered in these remain very fragmented. A key conclusion of the project is that there is a real need for developing further Nordic cooperation in this field.

The results of the online survey as well as the discussions during the project workshop revealed that interest in nature-based solutions in relation to integration is expanding rapidly. Especially various NGOs across Nordic countries have taken the initiative and started developing nature-based practices for immigrants to help them get familiar with Nordic nature and ways of using it. There is also a growing interest from the private sector working at the interface of nature-based social and well-being as well as tourism services. The public sector has been slower at seeking nature-based solutions for integration work. The integration focus of the public sector has primarily been on issues such as health, education and employment, and natural areas have not yet been seen as a resource or an arena where integration may take place. However, interest in nature-based solutions is increasing also among immigration workers, specialists, teachers and educators at the public sector who have started to apply nature-based methods at schools, kindergartens and as a part of the integration training. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how nature-based methods could be used to promote successful integration and whose responsibility nature-based integration should be.

There is also increasing academic interest in immigrants' and multicultural encounters with nature, for instance, in the fields of outdoor recreation, leisure, public health and wellbeing, spatial planning and sustainable use of natural resources. Most of the current research focuses on the immigrants' use, experiences, perceptions and

preferences of different natural environments. Some research has also explored how natural environments affect the immigrants' acculturation and adaptation processes and facilitate social interaction between groups of different ethnic backgrounds. Importantly, there have also been studies that have explored the ethnic minorities' access to green infrastructure and what are the management and planning implications of multiculturalism. In most of the previous studies the focus has been on urban parks, forests and green infrastructure.

According to the results of the ORIGIN project, the current research and academic knowledge, however, is not effectively applied by the NGOs or public and private actors working with nature-based integration. In fact, due to the perceived lack of information many NGOs have resorted to conducting their own research and development actions to make sense of the phenomenon. Many organisations are currently and simultaneously making efforts to develop practices and guidance for nature-based integration. Therefore, there is an urgent need for integrating the knowledge of these activities and also for better bridging between the research and the practical work.

One of the reasons for the fragmentation of nature-based integration is related to the lack of clarity of the concepts applied. Besides "integration", previous research has applied concepts such as acculturation, adaptation, sense of place and place attachment to refer to the relationship between the immigrants and the receiving society and country. Consequently, the aims of previous initiatives have ranged from increasing immigrants' participation in nature-based activities (e.g. outdoor recreation) to improving their psychological, social and physical well-being and enhancing their participation and ownership in local land use planning. One of the recurring themes during ORIGIN project has been the need to better define what exactly is meant by nature-based integration. The survey responses illustrate that there are almost as many understandings of the concepts as there are respondents and the workshop participants proposed a list of questions that need to be answered:

- Should nature-based integration be understood as an end or means?
- What are the aims, why is nature-based integration needed?
- What kind of activities and practices can be understood as nature-based integration?
- How and if the effectiveness and quality of nature-based integration can be somehow measured?

- Who are the target groups of nature-based integration, who should be included?
- How can nature-based integration enhance not only the possibilities of immigrants to participate in outdoor recreation but also enhance their integration into the Nordic societies.

Although there are more questions than answers the results of the project emphasise that it is important to find common concepts and definitions to have a proper foundation for further cooperation and knowledge exchange especially because nature, outdoor recreation and everyman's rights are central concepts in the Nordic cultures and human-nature relationship. Such concepts should be inclusive and flexible for a range of different aims and perspectives – different types of natural environments and ways of using and interacting with nature. Similarly, sustainable real integration should not be about imposing top-down ideas, drawing lines between “right and wrong” or segregating “us from them”. The immigrants' ways of using and interacting with nature should be acknowledged and mutual learning should be promoted as a part of the integration process.

## Recommendations

As concluded by the workshop feedback, the ORIGIN project has only managed to touch the surface of an upcoming and timely phenomenon that warrants future attention in Nordic countries. More specifically, considering the centrality of nature and various nature-based practices in the Nordic lifestyles, Nordic countries have the potential of becoming real forerunners in nature-based integration globally (there has already been requests from the EU). This requires further and more intensive cooperation across borders, between different types of actors and spatial scales. We have formulated the following practical recommendations for further Nordic cooperation:

- Finding common definitions and concepts of “Nature based integration” to enable knowledge exchange between countries and sectors as well as integrating R&D into practical work.

- Studying and getting a better understanding of the immigrant perspective: barriers that prevent people from participating, immigrants' needs and preferences, embodied experiences of nature, managing fears and safety concerns. It would be important to involve immigrant groups and associations in any further Nordic or national cooperation.
- Making a comprehensive review of current practices and projects: how are projects initiated and organised, what are the similarities and differences across countries, how different practices and their impacts can be evaluated and the best practices identified, what are the building-blocks of good practices.
- Identification of the best practices, sharing and creating joint tools and materials.
- Nordic platform: establishing a platform for cross-border networking and knowledge exchange, collecting information in one place, organising another workshop or a bigger event (2-days).
- Public sector: providing public sector a better understanding of the benefits and various practices of nature-based integration for better coordination and more successful integration of immigrants into Nordic societies.
- Extending cooperation to include all Nordic countries/territories and to extend cooperation beyond Nordic countries.

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# Resume

Immigration og integration af migranter i de Norden er et aktuelt emne, primært på grund af den store tilstrømning af asylansøgere og flygtninge til Europa siden 2015. Sammenlignet med andre Europæiske lande har de Nordiske lande åbnet dørene for mange flere flygtninge og asylansøgere baseret på indbyggerantal. Ser man på tilstrømningen af immigranter over en længere årrække ses det ligeledes tydeligt at de Nordiske lande udvikler sig i en mere multikulturel retning. Denne befolkningstilstrømning giver mulighed for at løse udfordringer relateret til den demografiske udvikling i Norden, men rejser samtidig også mange udfordringer. Større fokus på og grundig planlægning af immigranternes integration i de Nordiske lande har været foreslået som nogle af løsningerne til disse udfordringer.

Natur-baserede løsninger kan have et potentiale for at være både effektive og omkostnings-effektive i forhold til at integrere immigranterne i de Nordiske lande. Et fællestræk i Norden er en livsstil som i høj grad inkluderer natur og friluftsliv – også i bynære områder. Der er mange ligheder hvad angår friluftsliv i Norden eksempelvis: gode adgangsforhold til natur og grønne områder, mulighed for at plukke bær og svampe i naturen, ligesom naturoplevelsen også er central. Samtidig er der evidens for at naturen har en positiv indflydelse på fysisk og psykisk sundhed.

Den Terrestiske Økosystem Gruppe (TEG) under Nordisk Ministerråd har støttet nærværende projekt "ORIGIN" i 2016, for at øge forståelsen af naturens betydning i forhold til integration af flygtninge og immigranter i Norden. Projektet lagde op til nordisk samarbejde om "Naturbaseret integration", et felt der indtil fornylig ikke har været særlig velundersøgt. Dette projekt samlede forskere, NGO'er samt offentlige og private aktører som arbejder med naturbaseret integration. Projektgruppen gennemførte i efteråret 2016 en mindre spørgeskemaundersøgelse i Finland, Norge, Sverige og Danmark om "Naturbaseret integration" (N=129), og der blev afholdt en workshop med 27 deltagere i Helsinki i oktober 2016.

I denne rapport præsenteres både resultaterne af spørgeskemaundersøgelsen og af workshoppen ligesom otte forskellige casebeskrivelser illustrerer hvordan der i Norden arbejdes med Naturbaseret integration. Rapporten konkluderer, at der er en

stigende interesse for naturbaseret integration, og erfaringerne med at bruge naturen i integrationssammenhænge i Norden er gennemgående positive. Ud over den stigende interesse fra praktikere for at arbejde med naturbaseret integration er forskere også begyndt at undersøge feltet fra forskellige vinkler, en udvikling der ikke ses andre steder. Derfor har de Nordiske lande gode muligheder for at blive frontløbere inden for naturbaseret integration.

På trods af de positive erfaringer med naturbaseret integration, viser rapportens resultater også at feltet er meget fragmenteret, og at erfaringsudveksling næsten ikke er eksisterende, hverken på nationalt plan eller på tværs af de Nordiske lande. Derudover er den forskningsbaserede viden ikke nået ud til praktikerne i NGO'er eller i den private og offentlige sektor. En af årsagerne for feltets fragmentering er mangel på tydelige definitioner. Lige pt. er naturbaseret integration ikke defineret entydigt, ligesom det også er uklart hvad målet med naturbaseret integration er, om det er et mål i sig selv, eller et middel til at nå et mål.

Rapporten afsluttes med en række anbefalinger: 1) der er behov for en fælles definition af begrebet naturbaseret integration, 2) flygtninge og immigrant perspektivet bør inddrages i udviklingen af feltet naturbaseret integration, 3) yderligere afdækning af best-practices inden for naturbaseret integration, 4) en diskussion af hvorvidt de forskellige indsats kan anvendes i andre Nordiske lande, 5) udvikling af en fælles nordisk platform for erfaringsudveksling og 6) integration af "natur-baseret integration" i den "klassiske" integrationsindsats i den offentlige sektor.

# Appendix 1. Survey questionnaire

## Introduction

Welcome to our survey on nature-based integration in the Nordic countries! The survey is a part of the project ORIGIN (Outdoor recreation, nature interpretation and integration in Nordic countries) funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The aim of the project is to gather experiences and good practices to share across our Nordic borders. You can find more information about the project here ([link to the project website](#)).

In this survey we use the term nature-based integration by which we mean the use of outdoor recreation, nature interpretation or any other nature-based approach to assist immigrant integration processes as well as the immigrant populations' possibilities to use and enjoy nature. Since no established definition of the term nature-based integration exist, we have reserved space in the end of the questionnaire for you to share your ideas and views on the terminology. In this survey we are considering immigrants in all stages of integration processes. We are also considering nature-based approaches for people who are raised in a Nordic country but with immigrant backgrounds.

Your answer is valuable to us. We hope that you share with us your own experiences and views, tell us about good examples and development needs. The responses will be treated with complete confidentiality and your contact information will not be connected to your answers.

We welcome responses from all Nordic countries, from the public, the private sector and the NGOs. Be free to distribute the link to the survey to those persons and instances you think have valuable expertise and opinions on the topic.

### *1. Background information*

1. Which Nordic country your answers mainly concern?

*If you chose other Nordic country or territory, please describe:*

(Please choose: Finland / Sweden / Norway / Denmark / other territory).

2. I will respond to the questionnaire:

- As a representative of an organization.
- As an expert or researcher.
- As a private person.

3. If you will respond as a representative of an organisation; what type of organisation do you represent?

- The public sector.
- The private sector.
- NGO.

## *II. Our previous experiences and practices*

How has nature-based integration been used so far?

4. Tell us about your own, or others' projects, research or practices you are aware of and you also think we should know about. Please, mention sources/reports you know of. (open-ended)

5. To what extent are nature and outdoor recreation used in integration processes in your own work and in your country?

- In your own work (Not at all ... Very much).
- In your country (Not at all ... Very much).

In your opinion:

6. Who are the key players when it comes to nature-based integration in your country? (open-ended)

### *III. Opportunities and barriers*

In your opinion:

7. To what extent the following aspects of nature-based integration should be emphasized (Not at all ... Very much)? Please evaluate also whose responsibility each of the aspects should be (public, private or NGO).

- 1. Increase the knowledge of the recreational opportunities of natural and cultural landscapes and green areas.
- 2. Increase accessibility of nature for immigrants.
- 3. Tackle possible fears related to wild nature.
- 4. Increase the knowledge of Every Man's Rights (or Free Access to Nature).
- 5. Increase immigrants' possibilities to influence the planning of natural and cultural landscapes and green spaces.
- 6. Increase immigrants' possibilities to influence the use of natural and cultural landscapes and green spaces.
- 7. Promote the use of nature as an educational arena.
- 8. Promote the use of nature as a meeting place and arena for social interaction.
- 9. Increase the understanding of Nordic human-nature relationship and use of nature.
- 10. Increase the understanding of immigrants' immigrants' use of nature and human-nature relationship.
- 11. Increase the knowledge and use of nature in promoting immigrants' physical health.
- 12. Increase the knowledge and use of nature in promoting immigrants' mental health.
- 13. Increase the knowledge and use of nature as a food resource.
- 14. Other? Please describe:

8. To what extent do you work with the following groups' specific needs in nature-based integration (Not at all ... Very much)? In your opinion: Should the focus be more or less on these groups in the future (Less, Neutral, More)?

- Women.
- Men.
- Children and young people.
- Elderly.
- Individual ethnic groups.
- Other groups? Which?

In your opinion:

9. How important is nature-based integration among other integration work (Not important at all ... Very important)?

- At present.
- In the future.

10. If possible, please motivate your answers (open-ended).

11. Based on your own experiences, please assess how important the following barriers are for nature based integration at present?

A. Barriers at organisational level:

- A1. Lack of economic resources.
- A2. Lack of knowledge.
- A3. Prejudices and attitudes.
- A4. Lack of skilled people or actors.
- A5. Lack of experience of work with persons of immigrant background.
- A6. Lack of innovative and inclusive activities.
- A7. Legal and regulatory barriers.



- A8. Lack of collaboration between organisations.
- A9. Lack of collaboration within organisations.
- A10. Lack of understanding of the responsibilities and possibilities possibilities of different actors (public, private, NGOs).
- A0. Other barriers at organisational level? Please describe:

B. Barriers at individual level (individuals with immigrant background):

- B1. Lack of knowledge about access.
- B2. Lack of appropriate green areas in neighbourhood.
- B3. Lack of knowledge about nature in general.
- B4. Lack of knowledge about rules.
- B5. Prejudices and attitudes.
- B6. Fear of wild nature.
- B7. Other safety concerns.
- B8. Lack of interest.
- B9. Feeling of not being welcome or included in nature-based activities.
- B10. Cultural and religious barriers.
- B11. Lack of company.
- B0. Other barriers at individual level? Please describe:

#### *IV. Knowledge needs and collaboration*

In your opinion:

12. What kind of knowledge is needed for developing nature-based integration further? What kind of knowledge do you need? Please, tell us also why! (open-ended).

In your opinion:

13. How can and should Nordic countries collaborate? Which actors should collaborate? What kind of Nordic collaboration do you need? Please, tell us also why! (open-ended).

#### *V. Feedback to us and other optional input*

We would love to know about your understanding of nature-based integration!

14. How do you think nature-based integration should be defined and what do you consider to be nature-based integration? (open-ended).

15. To whom or to which actors should this questionnaire be sent? If possible, please leave contact details (email address) of any potential respondents you may know of. (open-ended).



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## Nature-based integration

Increased attention to, and careful planning of the integration of migrants into Nordic societies is ever more important. Nature based integration is a new solution to respond to this need. This report presents the results of a Nordic survey and workshop and illustrates current practices of nature based integration by case study descriptions from Denmark, Sweden Norway and Finland. Across Nordic countries several practical projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration and there is also growing academic interest in the topic. Nordic countries have the potential of becoming real forerunners in nature based integration even at the global scale.

