

Defining nature-based integration

Perspectives and practices from the Nordic countries

Sandra Gentin, Anna Maria Chondromatidou,
Kati Pitkänen, Ann Dolling, Søren Præstholm
and Anna María Pálsdóttir



Defining nature-based integration – perspectives and practices from the Nordic countries

**Sandra Gentin, Anna Maria Chondromatidou, Kati Pitkänen,
Ann Dolling, Søren Præstholt and Anna María Pálsdóttir**



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES AND
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

REPORTS OF THE FINNISH ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE 16 | 2018
Finnish Environment Institute

Defining nature-based integration – perspectives and practices from the Nordic countries

Authors: Sandra Gentin¹, Anna Maria Chondromatidou¹, Kati Pitkänen², Ann Dolling³,
Søren Præstholt¹ and Anna María Pálsdóttir³

1) University of Copenhagen,

2) Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE),

3) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)

Subject Editor: Tapio Lindholm

Financier/commissioner: The report has been enabled by support from the Nordic Council of Ministers (Terrestrial Ecosystem Group TEG and the Department of Knowledge and Welfare), Finnish Environment Institute and University of Copenhagen

Publisher and financier of publication: Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)
P.O. Box 140, FI-00251 Helsinki, Finland, Phone +358 295 251 000, syke.fi

Layout: Kati Pitkänen and Aleksandra Riki

Cover photo: Aleksandra Riki

The publication is available in the internet (pdf): syke.fi/publications | helda.helsinki.fi/syke and in print:
syke.juvenesprint.fi

ISBN 978-952-11-4945-0 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-952-11-4946-7 (PDF)

ISSN 1796-1718 (print)

ISSN 1796-1726 (online)

Year of issue: 2018

ABSTRACT

Defining nature-based integration –perspectives and practices from the Nordic countries

Nature-based solutions are an efficient way to address simultaneously environmental, economic and social problems especially in urban areas. In the Nordic countries, there has been increasing interest in nature-based integration and a number of practical projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration. This report presents the lessons learned and experiences gathered in these practices. The report analyses the similarities and differences of Nordic nature-based integration practices in terms of aims, environments, target groups and pros and cons. Based on the analysis a working definition of nature-based integration is presented. This definition summarises how nature can be used to support integration of immigrants through building of identity, providing positive experiences and strengthening institutional capabilities. The report concludes in a checklist of key components to be considered when planning, conducting or evaluating nature-based integration practices. In the second part of the report, 16 descriptions from practitioners in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway are described in more detail to illustrate the various ways nature is used for integration across these countries.

Keywords: nature-based integration, nature-based solutions, integration, immigrants

TIIVISTELMÄ

Luontokotoutumista määrittelemässä – Pohjoismaisia näkökulmia ja käytäntöjä

Luontopohjaisilla ratkaisuilla voidaan vastata samanaikaisesti ympäristöön, talouteen ja sosiaalisiin haasteisiin erityisesti kaupunkialueilla. Pohjoismaissa on ollut kasvava kiinnostus luonnon hyödyntämiseen osana maahanmuuttajien kotoutumista. Eri pohjoismaissa on käynnistetty maahanmuuttajille suunnattua luontotoimintaa ja toteutettu runsaasti erilaisia luontokotoutumiseen liittyviä hankkeita. Tämä raportti esittelee näissä toimenpiteissä ja hankkeissa kerättyjä kokemuksia ja oppeja. Raportti tuo esiin, millaisia samankaltaisuuksia ja eroavaisuuksia löytyy eri Pohjoismaiden luontokotoutumisen projektien käytännön tavoitteissa, toimintaympäristöissä ja kohderyhmissä. Samalla raportissa pohditaan, kuinka projektit ovat onnistuneet toiminnassaan ja millaisia puutteita niissä on havaittu. Raportin analyysiosio käsittelee luontokotoutumisen määritelmää, ja siinä tarkastellaan, millä eri tavoin luonto voi tukea maahanmuuttajia integroitumaan yhteiskuntaan, kuten muokkaamalla heidän identiteettiään, tarjoamalla myönteisiä kokemuksia ja vahvistamalla heidän institutionaalisia valmiuksiaan. Raportti sisältää listan toimintatapoja, joita on tärkeää ottaa huomioon, kun suunnittelee, ohjaa tai arvioi luontokotoutumista. Tutkimuksen toisessa osassa kuvataan 16 erilaista luontokotoutumisen käytäntöä ja hanketta, joita on toteutettu osana maahanmuuttajien kotouttamista Tanskassa, Suomessa, Ruotsissa ja Norjassa.

Avainsanat: luontokotoutus, luontopohjaiset ratkaisut, yhteiskuntaan integroituminen / kotoutuminen, maahanmuuttajat

SAMMANDRAG

Definition på naturbaserad integration – nordiska perspektiv och praktiska exempel

Naturbaserade lösningar är ett effektivt sätt att samtidigt ta itu med både miljömässiga, ekonomiska och sociala problem, särskilt i stadsområden. I de nordiska länderna har intresset för naturbaserad integration ökat under senare tid och ett antal praktiskt inriktade projekt och initiativ har startats för att lyfta fram fördelarna med natur som en del i integrationen. Rapporten presenterar kunskap och erfarenheter som samlats med hjälp av de olika projekten. Rapporten presenterar en analys av likheter och skillnader i de nordiska länderna med avseende på mål, naturmiljöer, målgrupper och fördelar och nackdelar. Baserat på analysen presenteras en arbetshypotes om naturenbaserad integration som sammanfattar hur

naturen kan användas till stöd för integration av nyanlännda genom att bygga identitet, ge positiva erfarenheter och stärka institutionell kapacitet. Rapporten avslutas med en checklista med nyckelkomponenter som bör beaktas vid planering, genomförande eller utvärdering av naturbaserade integrationsprojekt. I rapportens andra del finns 16 beskrivningar, från utövare i Danmark, Finland, Sverige och Norge, samlade för att illustrera de olika sätt som naturen kan användas för integration i de olika länderna.

Nyckelord: Naturbaserad integration, naturbaserade lösningar, integration, nyanlännda

CONTENTS

PART I: THEORY AND BACKGROUND	7
1. Introduction and context	9
2. The 2nd Nordic Workshop on nature-based integration	11
3. Results of the workshop	13
3.1 Overview of practices	13
3.2 Observations across the practices	15
4. Understanding and defining nature-based integration	16
4.1 Combining theory of integration with nature-based solutions	16
4.2. Analysing the practices according to the definition	18
5. Discussion	20
5.1 Target group – nature-based integration	20
5.2 Barriers for applying practices across borders	21
5.3 Evaluating practices	21
6. Recommendations and checklist for practices	22
PART II: Examples of nature-based integration practices in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden	25
Denmark	27
1. State owned nature areas as drivers for integration	27
2. Nature Friend	28
3. Green urban communities for vulnerable families	29
4. The Danish Refugee Council’s Youth Summer camps	30
5. Faktis Garden	31
6. Den Korte Snor	34
Finland	36
7. ESIKOTO project	36
8. Liikuntavuosi luonnossa project	39
Norway	41
9. Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper	41
10. Introduction to outdoor recreation through the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants	42
Sweden	44
11. Skogen som integrationsarena	44
12. Biotopias Äventyrsgrupp	45
13. Natur för alla – Nature for everyone	47
14. What do our newcomers know about the countryside?	48
15. Hi Stranger! (Hej Främling!)	49
16. Nature conservation and integration	50

PART I: THEORY AND BACKGROUND



Figure 1: An example of nature-based integration from Denmark (Nature friend). In this practice, immigrants and locals went for a walk in the local nature to go tadpole fishing in the local pond.

1. Introduction and context

Nature-based solutions are an efficient way to address simultaneously environmental, economic and social problems especially in urban areas (European Commission 2015). There is increasing evidence on the positive benefits of natural areas¹ to mental and physical health and well-being. Also, natural areas offer important sites for leisure and recreation and play an important role in promoting the mixing of different people with different ethnic backgrounds, both minority and majority populations (Jay and Schraml, 2009; Peters et al., 2016).

Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) has funded project ORIGIN (2016-2018) to increase the understanding of the role of nature in the successful integration of immigrants into the Nordic societies. ORIGIN has launched Nordic cooperation within “nature-based integration” and established a network bringing together researchers, third sector organisations and public and private actors working in the fields of immigrant integration, nature and/or outdoor recreation. During the project, it has become clear that across 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 remain fragmented. As support to the work in ORIGIN, the Network of Outdoor Organisations in the Nordic Countries (NON) have recommended establishing a Nordic network for nature-based integration to ensure the inclusion of immigrants in outdoor recreation and organisations promoting Nordic outdoor culture (Friluftsliv i Norden... 2018).

To facilitate knowledge exchange across borders, ORIGIN has initiated annual Nordic workshops on nature-based integration. The **first workshop** was organised in 2016 in Helsinki with 27 participants from Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Prior to the workshop, a survey was conducted to provide an overview of the state-of-the-art in nature-based integration practices and actors in Nordic countries. At the workshop, the participants learned about current practices in different countries, as well as they had the opportunity to network. The workshop revealed that specially a broad range of third sector organisations have taken the initiative and started to develop nature-based practices for immigrants and involve them in the ongoing practices and activity groups. The aim of these activities is to familiarise the immigrants with Nordic nature and ways of using it in order to make the newcomers aware of the broad range of opportunities in the Nordic nature and provide opportunities for immigrants to form social bonds with the rest of the community. One of the outcomes of the discussions at the workshop was that the knowledge and experiences gathered in these experiments and initiatives should be more effectively transferred and disseminated not only nationally but also across the Nordic borders. Accordingly, there is a need to find common definitions and concepts for nature-based integration as well as systematically collect and evaluate lessons learned and define joint criteria for nature-based integration practices. Pitkänen et al (2017) present the results and challenges discussed at the first workshop held in Helsinki 2016.

The **second workshop** in Copenhagen in 2017 addressed the challenges identified at the first workshop. The workshop brought together 28 participants from Nordic countries, consisting of researchers, practitioners and public sector representatives. Prior to the workshop researchers worked on a systematic literature review of nature-based integration in Europe (Gentin et al., forthcoming). In the workshop, the results of the review functioned as the starting point for co-creation and iteration of a joint understanding of nature-based integration. This report presents the results of the second workshop with an emphasis on a variety of Nordic nature-based integration practices, and further an evaluation and identi-

¹ We understand natural areas as a broad term, encompassing both rural and urban areas Natural milieu

fication of lessons learned of these practices. The reader of this report are practitioners and policy makers across Nordic countries in order to inspire, as well as peer-to-peer support and for helping to avoid pitfalls in designing and launching practices.

In the next sections, we will first describe the workshop and its' results. We will then discuss the similarities and differences of Nordic practices and present a working definition of nature-based integration relating the practices to this definition. Finally, we will discuss the results, and provide a checklist of key components of nature-based practices. In the appendix, we have collected 16 descriptions from practitioners in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway to illustrate the various ways nature is used for integration across these countries. Researchers and practitioners have produced the appendix in collaboration. Most of the practices in the appendix have been discussed at the workshop; however a couple of inspiring practices were added after the workshop.

An example of the cases presented at the workshop is a Norwegian practice on nature-based integration "Outdoor recreation for ethnic minority groups" (Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper") by Midt-Agder Friluftsråd. This practice is one of the most long-term examples in Nordic countries and has been running since 2002. The key points of the practice are described below, the full description of the practice including contact information can be found in the appendix.

Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper by Midt-Agder Friluftsråd, Norway

The aim of the practice is to introduce immigrants to outdoor recreation in Norway. The target group is rather broad including both immigrants and asylum seekers in all ages. First, immigrants are introduced to the near-by nature and local geography around the city where they live – through outdoor activities and walking in the near-by nature. Later, the immigrants are taken to green environments further away from urban environment e.g. to the forests and sea. In short, the participants are introduced to different levels of wilderness, reaching from urban parks to the mountains.

The practice empowers the immigrants in terms of: 1) knowledge about the local natural and green environment, 2) how to use the areas, 3) equipment needed, and finally 4) which laws and regulations exist, which have to be followed. Hereby the immigrants will get knowledge about the Norwegian culture and lifestyle, as outdoor recreation is a fundamental part of the Norwegian lifestyle. The Norwegian Government supports this practice.

The practice has been running since 2002 and is continuously been developed. The immigrants train their language during the outdoor recreation activities and get familiar with outdoor environments. Another positive side effect is that parents get familiar with "outdoor recreation" so that they know what their children are doing when being outdoors in school or kindergarten. Participants in this practice learn about nature in general and biology. However, the activities are not necessarily fostering close social relationships between the newcomers and the participants from the outdoor organisations. One explanation could be that here are only few Norwegians involved as group leaders to a much larger group of immigrants or asylum seekers. Additionally, the organisations main competences are within outdoor recreation, not about social integration issues.

2. The 2nd Nordic Workshop on nature-based integration

The second Nordic Workshop on nature-based integration took place in Copenhagen in October 2017. At the workshop both practitioners and researchers working with nature-based integration were gathered to network share experiences, discuss nature-based integration, and eventually find a common understanding on nature-based integration (see program in Table 1).

Table 1. Program of the 2nd Nordic Workshop of nature-based Integration

9 – 9:30	Registration and coffee
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome to the workshop and project presentation (Kati Pitkänen, SYKE)
	Concepts and definitions
9:45 – 10:15	Perspectives to immigrant integration I (Per-Svein Holte, Midt-Agder Friluftsråd)
10:15 – 10:45	Nature-based integration, results of the literature review (presentation by the project group: Sandra Gentin & Anna Maria Chondromatidou, UCPH, Kati Pitkänen SYKE)
10:45 – 11:30	”Science meets practice”: Discussion on research gaps and needs from the practitioners perspective (discussion in small groups)
11:30 – 12:00	Feedback and summing up the group discussions (Sandra Gentin & Søren Præstholt, UCPH)
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch break
	Best practices
12:45 – 13:15	Perspectives to immigrant integration II (Mette Brehm Jensen; FAKTI)
13:15 – 14:45	”Good practices”: Discussion on defining good practices in nature-based integration. The discussion is based on the practices the participants have handed in before the workshop (discussion in small groups)
14:45 – 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 – 15:30	Feedback and summing up the group discussions (Sandra Gentin & Søren Præstholt, UCPH)
15:30 – 16:00	Where do we go from here, finishing the workshop (Kati Pitkänen SYKE)

Prior to the workshop, the practitioners handed in a pre-assignment in which they described their practices. These descriptions were then revised and complemented based on the workshop discussions. The following guiding questions were answered:

1. Name of practice and contact information
2. Aim of the practice and short description
3. What was the role of nature in the practice?
4. Where did the practice take place – in which green environment?
5. Who was the target group of the practice, who participated?
6. What are the results and how are the results of measured?
7. What are the lessons learned and what are the pros and cons of the practice?

During the workshop, the participants were divided into small groups consisting of participants from different Nordic countries. In the groups the participants presented their practices (based on the pre-assignments) and discussed questions related to their own as well as to other practices from Nordic countries.

The aim of the discussions was to identify similarities and differences across the practices as well as to identify a common idea of the role and use of nature in the integration process. Hence, the group discussed:

- How is the practice or project linked to integration (how does the practice contribute to integration)?
- What is the role of nature in the practice – could the practice have taken place somewhere else (not in a green environment)?
- What were the pros and cons of the practice?

After the discussion, the group created a table (Table 2) summing up the main points of their discussions. These tables and the recorded small group discussion have formed the main data for further analysis and discussion of the practices presented in this report.

Table 2. Table used in small group discussions to identify the role as well as pros and cons in using nature to support integration

	How the practice/project contributes or is linked to integration?	What was the role of nature in the practice; could it have been done somewhere else (not in green environment)?	What were the pros and cons?
Practice 1			
Practice 2			
Practice 3			
Practice 4			
Etc.			

3. Results of the workshop

3.1 Overview of practices

This section summarises the different projects and experiences gathered at the workshop. All the practices are presented briefly in Table 3. The table provides an overview of all practices as well as the advantages and disadvantages (pros and cons) of each practice identified and discussed by the participants in the workshop. The appendix provides full descriptions of all practices, including the practitioners contact information.

Table 3. Brief description of the practices based on the pre-assignments and discussions at the workshop. See longer descriptions of the examples in part II of the report

Practice		What	Where	Target Group	Purpose	Pros	Cons	
1	DK	State owned nature areas as drivers for integration	Provision of natural areas used by other actors in case they want to use nature in their work with immigrants	Mainly urban forests	Varying depends on local actor involved in activity	Nature management and work in nature as tool for learning about Danish nature and nature management	Many possibilities for different activities in natural areas	Need for more knowledge about nature-based integration in order to make more use of opportunities provided by Nature Agency
2	DK	Nature Friend	Local volunteers plan and arrange a variety of activities for refugees	Urban forests and other urban green areas	Varying target group, depends on local group of refugees	To introduce the nearby nature Socializing	Education and knowledge Active participation	Weather Lack of local participation
3	DK	Green urban communities for vulnerable families	Establishment and development of integration gardens	Urban gardens	Vulnerable immigrant families (non-Western backgrounds)	Sustainability Develop a sense of belonging to society	Health Active participation	Participation difficulties Vandalism issues Conflicts between ethnic groups.
4	DK	The Danish Refugee Council's Youth Summer camps	Outdoor and indoor activities	Rural areas	Young refugees and locals	Social interaction	Health Social interaction	Lack of resources Lack of experienced staff
5	DK	Faktis Garden	Working with and talking about greenery and gardening	Enclosed garden in urban area in Copenhagen	Small group of excluded and isolated immigrant woman with health problems	Feel secure Develop a sense of belonging to society	Education and knowledge Health Active participation Social interaction	Funding issues Lack of volunteers and sometimes locals
6	DK	Den Korte Snor	Gatherings in the natural environment	All kinds of natural areas	Young refugees and locals	Social interaction	Health Social interaction	Challenging to motivate the target group
7	FI	ESIKOTO project	Voluntary conservation and maintenance work	National Parks and other protected areas	Refugees and asylum seekers	Sustainability Social interaction	Education and knowledge Work experience Health	Insurance, workwear, transportation, working ability evaluation of asylum seekers, common language, coordination

Practice		What	Where	Target Group	Purpose	Pros	Cons	
8	FI	Liikuntavuosi luonnossa project	Multisensory and educational experiences through nature activities	Nature areas near schools and homes	Immigrant children, youth and their parents	Education and knowledge, positive experiences in nature, well-being	Motivated participants, education, having fun	Hard to estimate long-term effects
9	NO	Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper	Outdoor recreation activities (Excursions in the nearby nature)	Nature near urban areas	All target groups (collaboration with Norwegian receiving school)	Information about right of access and other laws related to use of nature	Education and knowledge Social interaction	The project is anchored in the receiving school Lack of local involvement
10	NO	Introduction to outdoor recreation through the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants	Outdoor recreation activities (obligatory program)	Nature areas in and outside cities	Foreign nationals, mostly non-western immigrants	To introduce local nature	Mental and physical health Building social network Education and knowledge	Difficulties with collaboration with the municipality Lack of volunteers
11	SE	Skogen som integration-sarena	Gain knowledge about forests and forest related activities	Forest	Immigrants with a residence permit	Education and Knowledge Increased understanding of the forests and their importance for the Swedish society	Introduction to countryside living Education and knowledge	The project starts too late in the "integration chain". No connection with employment agency Limited local participation
12	SE	Biotopias Äventyrsgrupp	Different activities in and about nature	Natural areas (sometimes in Biotopias museum)	Youth (15-25 years) who have newly arrived in Sweden, and Swedish youth	Creating future interests and hobbies	Captive audience (schools), free choice of activity, varying numbers of participants, social interaction, active participation	Difficult to estimate amount of participants, uneven gender distribution, transportation, lack of local participation
13	SE	Natur för alla – Nature for everyone	Nature activities	Forest	Immigrants with a residence permit	Social interaction Health Education and knowledge Motivate immigrants to stay and settle in rural areas	Social interaction	Weather Lack of organization
14	SE	What do our newcomers know about the countryside?	Visits to different green businesses	Urban and rural areas	Young immigrants without parents	Education and knowledge	Develop a sense of belonging with rural areas	Knowledge about the Swedish rural areas is low
14	SE	Hi Stranger! (Hej Framling!)	Sports and outdoor recreation	Natural areas	All target groups	Sustainable society with physical and mental well-being among citizens	Free of cost activities Participating and socializing	No cons noticed
15	SE	Nature conservation and integration	Vocational training	Nature conservation site in Skåne county	Immigrants with residence permit and long term unemployed Swedish residence	Vocational training, nature conservation, language training and integration	Nature conservation, cultural exchange, training work skills and language, integration	No cons noticed

3.2 Observations across the practices

The workshop revealed both similarities and differences between the 16 practices shown in Table 3. All the practices have the use of nature and natural environment in common. This is not surprising as the aim was to collect practices related to nature-based integration. Most practices took place in natural environments but not necessarily in rural or other remote natural areas. Many of the activities took place in urban green spaces and also included garden environments. The gradient from urban green spaces to wilderness is emphasised in some projects, for instance in the example of Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper by Midt-Agder Friluftsråd. Urban parks are convenient and easily accessible natural areas that can function as an introduction to outdoor experiences – and the immigrants can easily use these areas on their own outside of the project context. Further, a gradual introduction of the immigrants to activities in more natural or wilderness surroundings outside the urban area was emphasised. Through the activities, the immigrants get to know the local nature, and this empowers them to go there on their own. Participants of the workshop perceived the familiarity with local nature and the Nordic outdoor tradition as very important. It was emphasised that nature is not only an arena or a base for activities that can lead to integration – knowing the (local) nature is integration in itself.

The practitioners underlined a range of advantages of using nature as an arena for activities.

Natural areas are:

- For free to use, free admittance
- Less disturbed (that gives professionals the opportunity to observe the participants)
- Improving mental and physical health
- A meeting place (for locals and immigrants)
- A part of the Nordic culture and traditions
- Flexible (variety of activities can take place in nature)

To use nature for integration is not necessarily an easy task. Many of the practitioners highlighted both potentials as well as challenges in the use of nature in their activities targeted at immigrants. Below, the most common pros and cons raised by the practitioners are listed. It is worth noting, that the discussed pros are rather wide and include both practical and conceptual issues related to the added value of nature, while the cons of the practices are related to practical issues when nature is used for integration purposes.

Pros (in the use of nature):	Cons (in the use of nature):
Can improve mental health (stress reduction)	Weather is unpredictable
Education/Knowledge (language learning, knowledge of the biodiversity, etc.)	Lack of participation of locals
Social interaction (network)	Lack of motivation (both locals and immigrants)
Vocational training, work skills, experiences of certain activities (e.g. forestry, agriculture, nature management)	Funding issues including insurance
Participation in the community	Lack of equipment
Leisure (future hobbies)	Transportation to natural areas
Learning about rights (whether and when access is legal or not)	Difficulties in the organisation (e.g. lack of cooperation with/between authorities)
Can support place attachment / sense of belonging	

4. Understanding and defining nature-based integration

Based on the similarities and experiences across the practices we make a first attempt to define nature-based integration, by combining theory of integration with nature-based practices focusing on the relation to nature and the empowerment of immigrants.

The essential lesson learned from the practical examples is that nature-based integration is about both nature itself and nature as a base for empowering the immigrants to take part in their new society. The definition aims at gaining a better understanding of what is at stake in nature-based integration. Finally, we will analyse the practices according to the definition.

4.1 Combining theory of integration with nature-based solutions

The essential lesson learned from the practical examples is that nature-based integration is about both nature itself and nature as a base for empowering the immigrants to take part in their new society. Based on the similarities and experiences across the practices we make a first attempt to define nature-based integration. The definition aims at gaining a better understanding of what is at stake in nature-based integration. Further, the definition can be used as an inspiration for future initiatives.

When immigrants arrive to settle in a new country they have to secure a place in their new society – both in the physical sense and in the social and cultural sense (Penninx, 2009). Integration is a two-way process in which immigrants and the majority population negotiate, adjust and evolve hereby shaping the structure of society. According to Berry (1997, p. 10) “integration can only be ‘freely’ chosen, and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity”. Integration can be differentiated into four basic forms: structural, cultural, interactive and identificational integration (Esser, 1999). Structural integration refers to the access people have to common resources and main institutions of society such as labour, education, health services or natural areas and recreation opportunities. Cultural integration refers to acquisition of both knowledge and competences regarding cultural aspects, common practices, general rules of behaviour, things that enable individuals to navigate in the society. Friendships, partnerships, and other social aspects characterize the interactive integration, which refers to the inclusion of immigrants into the primary networks and relationships of society. Lastly, identificational integration refers to a sense of belonging to the new society in terms of emotional bonds to other groups or places. These four basic forms can be used to assess the role of nature in integration (see Table 4).

Table 4. Overview of Esser's four basic forms of integration linked to nature-based integration

	Structural Integration	Cultural Integration	Interactive Integration	Identificational integration
Integration	<p>Access to common resources and main institutions of society (Labour, education, health services and natural areas including recreation opportunities)</p> <p><i>Providing knowledge about society in order to being capable to make use of them</i></p>	<p>Acquisition of knowledge and competences cultural aspects, common practices, general rules of behaviour</p> <p><i>Empowering the newcomer to navigate in society</i></p>	<p>Friendship partnerships and other social aspects</p> <p><i>Inclusion of immigrants into primary networks and relationships of society</i></p>	<p>Sense of belonging to the new society</p> <p><i>Emotional bonds to other groups and places.</i></p>
Relation to nature and empowerment of immigrants	<p>Nature-based practices should:</p> <p>Promote access to nature Reinforce employment or language skills by providing training Enhance health and well-being</p>	<p>Nature-based practices should:</p> <p>Transfer knowledge in terms of codes of behaviour, legislation, customs and use of nature Transfer general knowledge which in other ways could be hard to verbalize or teach (learning by doing)</p>	<p>Nature-based practices should:</p> <p>Promote local involvement and interactions between immigrants and other local native citizens.</p>	<p>Nature-based practices should:</p> <p>Introduction of newcomers to nature and local greenspaces. Create positive experiences of the new country Develop the immigrants sense of belonging and place attachment to new country and everyday environment</p>
Nature-based integration	<p>Capabilities in terms of new skills within e.g. nature management. Further, improving physical, mental and social health.</p>	<p>Capabilities in terms of knowledge, learning about access etc.</p>	<p>Interaction with local inhabitants</p>	<p>Building up sense of belonging to the place by gaining familiarity with local nature and customs. Further, activities should give the migrant good experiences, which can promote both sense of belonging and place attachment.</p>

As Table 4 illustrates, nature-based integration is as much about being out in the nature and nature itself as about building the immigrants' capabilities in becoming active members of the society. Hence, nature-based integration can be defined as *the process in which an immigrant gets familiarized with the local environment, through activities that take place in a natural environment. Its basic pillars are building up identity, providing experiences and improving capabilities to empower the migrant to take part in the local society.*

4.2. Analysing the practices according to the definition

In Table 5, we present an analysis of the 16 practices according to the definition of nature-based integration mentioned above. We analyse the extent to which each of the practices contribute to these three pillars:

- **Identity:** Does the practice promote local participation in order to enhance social interaction, does the practice promote building of sense of place and connection to local environment.
- **Experiences:** What are the activities promoted by the practice, what kind of embodied and mental experiences are/can be gained from them?
- **Capabilities:** Does the practice promote building of institutional capabilities of immigrants. Focus is here on three different capabilities: job skills, education/learning and health.

Table 5 shows that many of the practices already contribute to all of the three pillars. Sometimes the three pillars are embedded in the aims of the practice, but often the practices may contribute to them less intentionally. For instance, in terms of building of capabilities many practices aim at enhancing knowledge about Nordic nature. However, one of the aims “improving health and well-being” of the immigrants, is not always stated as an aim. Out of the three pillars’ the most challenging task seems to be the promotion of true social interaction between immigrants and locals and in many of the practices there is only a limited involvement by locals.

Table 5 Overview of the practices and their relationship to the three pillars of nature-based integration. Each practice and its relationship is analysed and evaluated according to the three pillars: (-) not present in practice; (+) present in practice to lesser degree; (++) present in practice to high degree.

Country	Practice	1. Identity			2. Experience		3. Capabilities	
		Name	Where?	Local involvement	What?	Job Skills	Education	Health
1	DK	State owned nature areas as drivers for integration	Mainly urban forests	-/+	Conservation and nature management tasks	++	++	+
2	DK	Nature Friend	Urban forests and other urban green areas	+	Local volunteers plan and arrange a variety of activities for refugees	+	++	++
3	DK	Green urban communities for vulnerable families	Urban gardens	-/+	Establishment and development of integration gardens	++	++	++
4	DK	The Danish Refugee Council's Youth Summer camps	Rural areas	++	Outdoor and indoor activities	+	++	++
5	DK	Faktis Garden	Enclosed garden in urban area in Copenhagen	-	Working with and talking about greenery	++	++	++
6	DK	Den Korte Snor	All kinds of areas	-	Gatherings in the natural environment	-	++	++

	Country	Practice <i>Name</i>	1. Identity		2. Experience	3. Capabilities		
			<i>Where?</i>	<i>Local involvement</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>Job Skills</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Health</i>
7	FI	ESIKOTO project	National Parks and other protected areas	+	Voluntary conservation and maintenance work	++	+	++
8	FI	Liikuntavuosi luonnossa project	Nature near urban areas	-	Outdoor activities	+	++	+
9	NO	Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper	Natural areas	+	Outdoor recreation activities (excursions in the nearby nature)	+	++	++
10	NO	Introduction to outdoor recreation through the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants	Nature near urban areas	+	Outdoor recreation activities Obligatory programme	+	++	++
11	SE	Skogen som integrationsarena		+	Gain knowledge about forests and forest-related activities	+	++	++
12	SE	Biotopias Äventyrsgrupp	Urban and rural areas	-	Different activities in or about nature	++	++	++
13	SE	Natur för alla – Nature for everyone		++	Nature activities	+	++	++
14	SE	What do our newcomers know about the countryside?	Forest	+	Study visits to different green businesses	++	++	++
15	SE	Hi Stranger! (Hej Främling!)	Natural areas (sometimes in Biotopias museum)	++	Sports and outdoor recreation	+	++	++
16	SE	Nature Conservation and integration	Nature conservation sites	++	Working skills, nature conservation learning, language training and integration	++	++	++

5. Discussion

In this chapter, we will discuss emerging themes of the analysis of the workshop results. Immigrants are not a homogenous group, and the various groups of immigrants have different needs and capabilities that affect their integration process. Therefore, we will discuss the target groups and the relationship of the target group to the three pillars of nature-based integration. Although, the results of the workshop revealed a range of qualities of how nature can promote the successful integration of immigrants, there may be some barriers for the use of nature. We will outline some of these barriers and discuss the applicability of the practices across the borders in the Nordic countries. Finally, we will highlight issues related to the evaluation of the success of the nature-based integration practices.

5.1 Target group – nature-based integration

Nature-based integration is a long process and many factors affect the successful integration of immigrants into their new country. Especially gender, age, health, behaviour and psychological status of the participants seem to play a decisive role when planning of nature-based practices.

The practitioners mentioned the gender imbalance as an issue in nature-based integration. Men are the dominating group of immigrants coming to the Nordic countries. This may explain the high involvement of men in some of the practices analysed in this report. However, some of the practices require good physical condition and physical dynamics can be more demanding for women (e.g. practice ESIKOTO project from Finland). This may be the reason for why females avoid participating. Yet another explanation for the lack of women in certain practices can be due to fear of prejudices, ideas or beliefs that may create conflicts in their daily life (family, ethnic conflicts). Some women may not feel comfortable collaborating or working with men for reasons related to nationality, cultural background, or previous experiences of unpleasant situations or even violence. On the other hand, nature-based integration practices may offer women a way to overcome their fear or promote gender inequality, it is therefore important to emphasize that women not automatically should be excluded from certain activities.

In general, practitioners are very aware of their target group in the practices analysed for this report. According to practitioners, everyone should have access to nature therefore, awareness of vulnerable groups is important. Following from this, some of the presented practices were directed towards vulnerable groups of immigrants (e.g. women, children, adolescents or other special groups), and were accordingly not “open for everyone”. It was acknowledged in these practices, that different target groups may have special needs in terms of activities that can help them solve problems and further their integration into the society. “Fakti’s garden” – is an example of such a practice – as it is designed for needs of immigrant women with mental and physical health problems. Other practices focused on integration of young refugees and immigrants to whom integration plays a very important role in shaping their future in their new society. Therefore, practices targeted at the integration of children / young people should be carefully designed and applied relying on the help of professionals when necessary.

Following from this and the varying target groups, the foci of nature-based integration practices should vary. Some practices are specialized in improving the health of vulnerable groups while others have a very strong foundation in the provision of education and work skills. Some practices focus on building social relations between locals and immigrants. Through acknowledging and addressing the needs of different target groups, nature-based practices can make nature accessible for these groups and promote successful integration into the society.

5.2 Barriers for applying practices across borders

In the light of the recent refugee crisis in Europe, there is a need for finding new sustainable ways of integration of the refugees. We claim that nature-based integration is a win-win process that on the one hand helps in the refugee's integration and on the other hand provides environmental education and awareness, while promoting cultural knowledge about the new country. Consequently, it makes sense to consider whether these benefits of nature-based practices could be replicated outside of Nordic countries.

In general, nature-based practices are quite flexible as include activities taking place in nature and accessible natural places exist nearly everywhere. However, it is important to note that there are certain conditions for implementing the same or similar practices. Firstly, the organization of different practices requires to a varied degree professional staff, volunteers and facilities. There is a long tradition and abundance of volunteer organisations and local associations related to outdoor recreation and nature in Nordic countries. These have enabled the fast development of nature-based integration practices. Similarly, the political situation differs from country to country as well as the legislations and the laws. Some countries have more restricted measures concerning refugees and immigrants. Further, laws, regulations and rights concerning the right of access and use of nature differ between countries. Moreover, besides political will, integration is a process, that needs financial support from the governments and not all countries may have similar possibilities for providing support. Finally, application of nature-based integration practices across borders requires the evaluation and acknowledgement of the benefits of these practices in comparison to more traditional alternatives.

5.3 Evaluating practices

One of the recurrent themes during the workshop discussions was the lack of one or more reliable evaluation tools of nature-based practices. Only few of the practices presented at the workshop and in this report were evaluated in terms of assessing their success in promoting integration. Many of the practices were organised and financed as projects with external funding and keeping track of the number of participants seemed to be the key indicator for reporting the execution of the practice. The practitioners emphasized that it would be important also to evaluate the integration effect of the practices. Such evaluation would enable applying and developing practices that would have strong impact on the integration processes of immigrants.

Evaluation of the integration potential is not simple. However, through the perspective of both immigrants and practitioners and collection of both quantitative and qualitative information it would be possible to gain an insight of the effect of the practices. The evaluation tools and methods should be adapted and focussed to the needs of the participants and the practices, as methods applied with certain target groups would not necessarily work with all. Moreover, longitudinal studies could possibly reveal the integration potential. Through such long-term studies' the impacts of the integration practices to the lives of the participants could be investigated. There are no ready-made solutions for the evaluation of nature-based integration practices. The development of right indicators and tools for the evaluation requires more research and incorporation of research and evaluation perspective into the design and implementation of the practices.

6. Recommendations and checklist for practices

The close-knit human-nature relationship and importance of outdoor recreation in the Nordic countries has inspired many actors to seek solutions for integration of immigrants through nature, e.g. by providing a variety of activities aiming at building up the newcomers' relationship to their new home country. We have collected, discussed and reviewed 16 practices of nature-based integration across Nordic countries to identify commonalities in terms of what makes a practice successful and what can be learned from less successful experiments. Concluding from this, we proposed the definition of nature-based integration as *the process in which an immigrant gets familiarized with the local environment, through activities that take place in a natural environment. Its basic pillars are building up identity, providing experiences and improving capabilities to empower the migrant to take part in the local society.*

Based on the definition and lessons learned in the current practices, we propose the following recommendations and "checklist" that summarises some of the key components of nature-based integration practices. It is our hope that the checklist will inspire practitioners across Nordic countries and help to design and implement their practices and avoid pitfalls.

1) Paying attention to three pillars of nature-based integration

There are several forms of integration and several ways nature can support the integration of immigrants. The three pillars of nature-based integration summarise some of these dimensions. The following questions can be used to reflect how the different nature-based practices can contribute to one or more of these forms of integration.

Identity: Does the practice promote local participation in order to enhance social interaction between immigrants and locals? Would it be possible to include both immigrants and locals in the practice, and if yes how, and if no why not? Does the practice promote building the immigrants' sense of place and place attachment? Does the practice aim at enhancing the immigrants' knowledge of their local environment and empowering them to access local nature by themselves?

Experiences: What are the activities of the practice? Why are they part of the practice? What kind of embodied and mental experiences are/can be gained from the activities of the practice? How do these experiences meet the needs of the target group (depending on the group: e.g. feeling of safety, home, relaxation, pleasure, curiosity, excitement, adventure etc.).

Capabilities: Does the practice promote building of institutional capabilities of immigrants? Does the practice contribute to learning/mastering job skills? Does the practice promote learning about the culture, language, rules, regulations' etc. of the new country, and further, in which way? How does the practice contribute to the physical, mental and social health and well-being of the target group?

2) Including immigrants in the design and evaluation of the practice

Successful nature-based integration practices aim at empowering the beneficiaries rather than just providing them with pre-designed opportunities. In an optimal case, the practices should be co-designed with the beneficiaries to meet their needs and understanding and the immigrants should be given the power to choose. The inclusion of the immigrant perspective can and should be facilitated through carefully scrutinizing the experiences and by asking feedback and development suggestions from the participants.

3) Putting effort in reaching the target group

Since nature-based integration is a new and emerging concept there are not many organisations that have a long experience of working with immigrants and nature. Instead, the current practices are commonly offered by nature and outdoor recreation organisations that have reported on difficulties in reaching immigrant groups. Given the complexity and, for instance, strong code for privacy protection in Nordic countries, nature-based integration practices would benefit from building partnerships between nature and immigrant NGOs and public sector responsible for education and integration training. In addition, efforts should be targeted at effective marketing of the practices: the use of right medium/channels, understanding of the motivations and needs of the beneficiaries and projecting images that are understandable and positively interpreted.

4) Measuring success with diverse indicators

In most nature-based integration practices and projects, some kind of evaluation is required to report the success for funding or other reasons. Indicators used often comprise quantitative indicators such as number of participants. These, however, do not tell much of the success in terms of integration potential. Therefore, quantitative indicators should be accompanied with more qualitative evaluation that takes into account the experiences and feed-back of the participants. More intense cooperation between practitioners and researchers would assist in developing suitable evaluation methods and ensure objectivity in assessing the success of different practices.

5) Facilitating equal access

Nature and the benefits of nature should be equally distributed and accessible for all, despite gender, age, religion, health, socio-economic or ethnic status. Facilitating equal access, use and enjoyment of green spaces is therefore not only a key target of nature-based integration but a human rights imperative.

Promoting accessibility can take many forms ranging from physical accessibility to design of the practices to meet the needs of the target groups. In particular, special attention should be paid to the inclusion of **vulnerable groups** (such as women, children, or other groups) and facilitating their access to nature and the various benefits of natural environments.

REFERENCES

- Berry, J.W., 1997. Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology: an International Review* 46, 5–68.
- Esser, H., 1999. *Soziologie: Spezielle Grundlagen, Studienausgabe* ed. Campus-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main.
- Friluftsliv i Norden – Nordic Outdoor Life 2018. Recommendations from the Project. Available at: <https://www.suomenlatu.fi/media/2018-01-24-report-from-joint-nordic-project-recommendations-1.pdf>
- Jay, M., Schraml, U., 2009. Understanding the role of urban forests for migrants – uses, perception and integrative potential. *Urban For. Urban Green*. 8, 283–294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2009.07.003>
- Penninx, R. 2009. The comparative study of Integration Policies of European Cities. Published in German in: F. Gesemann & R. Roth (Eds.), *Lokale Integrationspolitik in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft – Migration und Integration als Herausforderung von Kommunen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Peters, K., Stodolska, M., Horolets, A., 2016. The role of natural environments in developing a sense of belonging: A comparative study of immigrants in the U.S., Poland, the Netherlands and Germany. *Urban For. Urban Green*. 17, 63–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2016.04.001>
- Pitkänen, K., Oratuomi, J., Hellgren, D., Furman, E., Gentin, S., Sandberg, E., Øian, H., Krange, O., 2017. Nature-based integration, TemaNord. Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/TN2017-517>

PART II: Examples of nature-based integration practices in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden



Figure 2. An example of nature-based integration from Finland. Immigrants fished, spent time with people in rural areas and got to know more on how to protect nature with "everyman's right". (Photo by Terhi Joensuu, Liikuntavuosi luonnossa –project).

Denmark

1. State owned nature areas as drivers for integration

Contact: Charlotte Mølgaard, Naturstyrelsen (The Danish Nature Agency), Denmark.

Aim of the practice

The Danish Nature Agency provides natural areas which can be used by other organisations/actors in cases where they would like to use green areas for their work with immigrants. Through this, the Nature Agency supports local integration initiatives – both facilities and areas are accordingly provided but no employees of the Nature Agency are involved in these projects. Tasks are only nature management tasks that without this practice not would be solved.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Nature management and work in nature is a tool, and could not be done without the areas provided by the Nature Agency. Further, the participants learn about Danish nature and nature management by participating in this practice.

Where: Type of environment: Mainly urban forests

What: Activities/practices: Varying tasks, depends on the organization/actor who is involved (other than Nature Agency)

Who: Target groups: Varying target groups, depends on the local actors e.g. municipality or other (other than Nature Agency)

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured? Success not measured

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

There are many possibilities for different activities in natural areas (provided by Nature Agency). The practice is not dependent on employees by Nature Agency, but by the initiatives by others. On the other hand, knowledge about nature's potential for nature-based integration is needed in order to make use of the opportunities provided by the Nature Agency.

2. Nature Friend

Collaboration between Danish Refugee Council & Centre for Outdoor Recreation and Nature Interpretation, Forest & Landscape College, University of Copenhagen.

Contact: Bente Bækgaard, Danish Refugee Council, Denmark

Aim of the practice

The aim of the practice is to introduce refugees and immigrants to outdoor recreation in the nearby nature in five different cities in Denmark (Ålborg, Lyngby, Bogense, Svendborg and Haslev). Locals who are interested in integration and participate in outdoor recreation (*naturefriends*) are volunteers who plan and arrange a variety of activities for refugees. The local groups of the refugee councils announce the planned tours to the local refugees, who then can sign up for the trips (free of charge).

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

The refugees were introduced to the nearby nature through a variety of activities (fishing, catching prawns, catching tadpoles etc.) but no information about rights of access and other rules for visiting natural areas were provided. Socializing (having food and talking) with the other participants after the activities was as important as participating in the activities.

Where: Type of environment: Manly areas in the urban forest

What: Activities/practices: Varying activities depends on the volunteers who are involved in planning and arranging the activity.

Who: Target groups: Varying target group, depends on the local refugee council group.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

The project has run in 2017, by the end of the project period approximately 350 refugees (men, women and children) have participated in the activities.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

- There are many possibilities for different activities in natural areas. The practice is dependent on the initiatives by the local *naturefriends*, and the interests of the refugees and immigrants.
- The weather has a big influence on the participation rate.
- Information about nature, rules of access etc. was not provided by the volunteers, as they had focus on the activity.
- The number of Danish participants was much smaller than the number of refugees/immigrants therefore the socializing language was not often Danish.

3. Green urban communities for vulnerable families

Establishment and development of integration gardens (R&D project)

Contact: Pernille Malberg Dyg; Metropol (Metropolitan University College), Denmark

Aim of the practice

To establish gardens that are locally owned and run, and contribute to health, integration and urban environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

To bring people across cultures, ethnicity and age together. Socializing, connecting to each other and thereby enhancing social interaction and improving the feeling of being safe in the neighbourhood.

Where: Type of environment: Urban community gardens in social housing areas in Denmark in Tingbjerg, Copenhagen, Tåstrupgård, Høje Tåstrup and Lindholm, Nykøbing Falster.

What: Activities/practices: Developing urban gardens in three social housing areas and studying the effects on wellbeing, health, employability and participation in the community

Who: Target groups: All people interested and living in the social housing areas (non-Western immigrants and others living in the area)

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges? No information yet, since the research has not yet started.

Lessons learned?

The findings from existing gardens in these areas and international research show that community gardens contribute to participants' self-reported wellbeing. They revitalize and beautify the communities and create a sense of safety amongst the residents in the neighbourhood and offer a setting for meeting ones neighbours. Some projects also use the garden as an income or pocket money project, where local youth can gain a small income.

Initial interviews and findings from international research show that it can be difficult to get people to participate due to hidden barriers (e.g. cultural, cost of participating in the gardens and other factors). Language and other barriers can also make the interaction between different ethnic groups difficult. Some areas (e.g. in Taastrup) still experience vandalism.

4. The Danish Refugee Council's Youth Summer camps

Contact: Mette Kjær Damholdt Sørensen; Sprogskole Hillerød, DFUNK (The Danish Refugee Council's Youth), Denmark

Aim of the practice

Meet other youth at the Summer-Camp, both Danes and refugees. Support the creation of networks and friendships that the youth later on can draw on in their everyday life – both between Danes and refugees as well as between refugees living in the same regions. Another goal is to bring forth individual skills, and to promote exchange of skills among the youth. Examples mentioned are Kurdish and African Dance, Arabic language and knitting.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Nature provides a physically delimited context that enhances the formation of groups. Without the presence of ordinary distractions of everyday life - such as going home, eating or drinking in different cafes, joining other friends or own family, or diverse individual activities – nature provides the opportunity of sharing a space that favours common activities, “opening up” for the creation of social networks. Moreover, nature represents a calm setting, without unnecessary distractions, large enough to avoid conflicts that may arise in a more restricted physical environment, such as an indoor space.

Where: Type of environment

In and around a continuation school (efterskole) in Jutland, in a rural area close to a fjord. The fjord provides opportunities for water-related activities, and the surrounding nature for games and nature related activities (e.g. joining around a bonfire).

What: Activities/practices: Outdoor and indoor activities and workshops facilitated mostly by volunteers.

Who: Target groups: Young refugees and Danes, aged 16 -30.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

No evaluation or standardized measurement, yet the creation of durable friendships and networks has been mentioned as the experienced outcome. Many of the participants kept in touch later on.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

The calm and spacious nature provides a stress reducing context, opening up for new relations on a positive and “neutral” ground.

Triangulation: The common focus on a third and common “object” – nature/activities in nature – facilitates communication. Communication among participants is less exposed and thus “safer”.

The creation of social relations in the camp context, can lead to networks that are more durable.

5. Faktis Garden

(Run by the Copenhagen based non-government organisation FAKTI)

Contact: Mette Brehm and Lise-Lotte Duch; FAKTI, Denmark

Aim of the practice

- To provide the target group with access to safe and positive nature experiences
- To improve conditions for integration by creating a supportive and therapeutic environment in which participants can feel safe, develop a sense of belonging to society and the environment and find support in their physical, mental and social rehabilitation.
- To use the garden as a medium for working with empowerment, social network, capacity building and non-formal language teaching.
- To use the garden as a green platform for social interaction within a local context in order to facilitate and support a greater mutual understanding, trust and integration between the different groups in our surrounding area.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Nature represents a frame for our activities and an object for communication and social contact. The protected, living and sensuous character of the garden creates an environment in which participants feel safe, experience stress relief and enhanced sense of energy, joy and meaningfulness. Participants point at how caring for living plants and seeing them grow has a positive effect on their mental health condition as it directs their focus away from pain, grief, worries and distress. Just to be surrounded by greenery helps some breathe and relax. The same effect would not be possible without the presence of nature and the plant-people relation it offers. Witnessing a tree coming back to life after being cut entirely down for instance can be a strong analogy to one's own life – especially a life in exile.

Moreover, it is our experience that nature's healing and palliative influence on the participant's mental state is closely related to enhanced social capacity and improved ability to concentrate and focus. Consequently, the garden works as a supportive environment for social contact and language learning. It must be taken into mind that a constantly stressed and alert nerve system tears on the physical and mental energy and accordingly hinders social involvement, learning and general functioning.

Where: Type of environment

FAKTI's Garden is an enclosed 500 m² garden in an urban area in Copenhagen and has been designed according to evidence-based guidelines for therapy gardens. It allows for different levels of experiences, activities, absorption or social contact according to the individual's energy, mood and level of health and rehabilitation. There are spacious rooms for social activities including a cob oven and outdoor cooking facilities and more secluded areas surrounded by greenery for contemplation and immersion. The garden has been designed to meet participants with reduced physical and mental capacity. Cultivated and work demanding areas are limited to a smaller group of raised and ergonomically designed beds and a more 'natural and wild' appearance is prioritized in the garden.

In FAKTI's Garden you find shrubs and trees commonly known from the Danish landscape - with many edible elements - as well as traditional fruit trees and herbs from the participant's home countries. The garden is surrounded by a natural green fence as well as a wooden fence protecting the garden from outside glances, thus making it a very private and safe space. The garden area, that was formerly a scout's ground, is today dominated by old tall trees adding a sense of wild forest to the garden as well as a vertical and open dimension.

What: Activities/practices

FAKTI'S GARDEN is a therapeutic year round garden project supporting adult women. Participation is on small group basis and the project run programs in the garden trice a week over three hours. The garden program is a combination of gardening activities (harvesting, sprouting, pruning etc.), light breathing, mindfulness and relaxation inspired exercises, yoga, wellness and outdoor cooking activities.

The garden-project draws on practical and theoretical traditions from within the broad field of garden therapy. The Natural Growth Project run by the London-based NGO 'Freedom from Torture' has been of great inspiration. Method varies over and combines from horticultural therapy, environmental therapy and eco therapy over creative therapy and to reminiscence work and narrative methods. Participation in the garden program is free, voluntary and time unlimited.

Who: Target groups

Adult women with non-Western refugee or immigrant background, typically in a poor and vulnerable health condition. Chronic pain of psychosomatic character, diabetes, anxiety, depression, traumas, PTSD, domestic violence and social isolation are common health issues. Some have also been exposed to torture. Most are of low socio economic status with no or limited education, Danish language skills or contact to labour market.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

In 2016 an intern evaluation report of the project was made and latest during summer 2017 an extern evaluation of the garden project has been carried out by the Copenhagen based social research company 'Als Research' based on qualitative interviews and participatory observation. The reports can be acquired through FAKTI (www.fakti.dk). According to the extern evaluation, FAKTI'S GARDEN has a significant and positive impact on the participant's mental wellbeing in terms of stress relief and enhanced sense of meaningfulness and joy. Being engaged and occupied in the garden, the participants experience a change in their perspective from focusing on loss, anxieties and worries. Instead they direct their attention at what they create and grow in the garden and it helps many to start acknowledging own individual competences and resources. It is stressed in the report how many participants feel happy and proud about being part of creating something. It further provides the participants with a sense of community and an opportunity to break out of their social isolation and build up a social network in connection with a positive and shared third that has shown very important and motivating for many.

In the garden project the participants are invited into an active decision-making process in connection with the ongoing maintenance and development of the garden and the activities, and it is pointed out in the evaluation, how an otherwise disempowered group of ethnic minority women through this process become empowered and valued contributors. Further, it is stressed, how this experience of being influential and listened to within the garden group represents an important contrast to the participant's daily life, where most decisions regarding themselves otherwise are taken without their involvement and consent, at the job center, in their homes etc.

Last, the report concludes that participation in the garden program and the regular access to fresh air and physical exercise in an outdoor setting it provides can be a first step towards a healthier lifestyle. In general, the target group has very limited contact with nature due to anxiety, fear of public spaces, social isolation and lack of energy, and the evaluation finds that the private and safe character of the garden is crucial in the perspective of the project's appeal to the target group. Many of the participants leave their headscarf in the garden and allow themselves for a more unrestrained and spontaneous behaviour, that the majority otherwise restrict themselves from in the public space.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

The garden attracts participants across age and ethnicity and has shown to be a good facilitator of inter-ethnic relations and community building. The social contact in the garden forms around a shared interest in plants, nature and outdoor activities and thus challenges and transcends group identities and group structures based on shared ethnicity. Another positive and unexpected outcome with regard to the mixed character of the garden group is the fact that Danish works as the only shared language. In that way, informal language learning is naturally incorporated in all activities within the garden community.

Influenced by research-based recommendations and guide-lines for therapy-gardens and stress reducing green environments a natural and wild appearance was prioritized in the initial garden design. It has later on shown less appealing to the target group. There tend to be a cultural conditioned preference towards more well maintained and structured garden or park designs with bright colored flowers and strong scents. In addition, it must be taken into consideration that a majority of the participants come from a background where wild nature can represent actual danger due to poisonous and dangerous animals and it is our experience that some are very alert towards elements as long grass for instance.

The more secluded spaces within the garden are used only to a very limited extent. There is a significant preference among the participants for spaces and activities that invites for social interaction.

The practice-based character of the social interaction and the presence of nature as a shared third have shown to have positive impact on the social contact as well as the language situation within the garden group. Some only speak few words of Danish, yet it seems less of a problem than in other contexts. In the garden one's attention is naturally directed at the sensuous impressions constantly offered by nature. The wind's blowing in the canopies, a bird's song and the sound of grass swaying works as shared experiences beyond language. Social pressure for one to communicate is at the same time reduced also allowing for a more introvert presence. In the perspective of language learning the garden environment has also shown supportive. Compared to class room teaching the character of our conversations in the garden is dominantly context-bound and authentic making it much easier to navigate in on a new language. It is moreover easier to remember new words when they are linked to sensuous experiences and physical actions.

The garden project provides the participants with an opportunity to connect with parts of their cultural heritage and rediscover skills and resources from earlier in life that can be drawn on and valued in the Danish society as well. Many of the participants have years of experience with cultivation, outdoor cooking, wild plants and preservation of fruits and greens etc. from their past life and recognition of well-known nature and garden elements clearly provides a link between past and present in an otherwise shattered life an identity.

In terms of individual preferences and physical and mental health condition the target group is very diverse, and it has proved of great importance that the garden allows for quiet and relaxing as well as more physically demanding activities that can be done at the same time without being of mutual disturbance. Raised beds adapted to standing height offer the participants important access to cultivation activities that the majority would be restrained from at ground level due to chronic body ache.

6. Den Korte Snor

Den Korte Snor (Municipality of Copenhagen social services, Denmark)

Aim of the practice

Den Korte Snor is an intensive preventative and treatment program for 80 children and teenagers (ages 10-17) who have been referred to the program because of their current problematic behavior. It is a community based, in-home intervention and our aim is to:

- decrease community violations and juvenile delinquencies by increasing the level of success in home, school, and community environments
- provide an intensive intervention to get back on track

As one part of the program, the child/teenager and his or her family are invited to participate in different outdoor activities in order to work with their social and behavioral challenges in the context of nature.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Several studies put forward evidence that a relationship with nature has a positive effect on people's physical and psychological health. Nature in our practice offers a context, where children/teenagers and their families (often with a high conflict level) experience low arousal, e.g. enabling other types of relations, behaviors, and emotions.

Where: Type of environment:

Woods, parks, coast, in and near the city of Copenhagen.

What: Activities/practices

A range of activities including, for instance, climbing trees, bush crafting, mountain biking, fishing, cooking on campfire and walking in parks. All activities are planned with low arousal elements.

Who: Target groups

Children and teenagers with troubling behavior: e.g. violence, threats, robbery, and otherwise unsafe behavior. Ages 10 to 17 and their families.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

Using nature as an element in our intervention, gives staff great opportunities to observe and interact with participants in a "less disturbed" environment where skills, competencies, and values can become more obvious. Participants often have very problem saturated stories about themselves and their lives, and our nature activities provide material for alternative stories of competencies and skills. Participants often talk about activities in nature as a very positive experience, sometimes even awaking memories of previous quality experiences in nature.

Professionals often describe how they experience another type of relationship with the participants, during and after an outdoor activity*. Den Korte Snor has a documented criminal preventive effect. Outdoor activities, however, are only one of many different types of interventions during a family's enrollment in the program. Specific results of activities in nature are not measured.

*Den Korte Snor has a declared Narrative approach which "seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work, which centres people as the experts in their own lives. It

views problems as separate from people and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives” (<http://dulwichcentre.com.au/what-is-narrative-therapy/>).

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Pros

- Pro-social relations between participants
- Compatible with our overall theoretical frame and methods
- Positive feedback from participants

Cons

- Can be challenging to motivate a teenager and his family to come out in nature
- Facilities

Finland

7. ESIKOTO project

Full name: Esikotouttamisen kehittämishanke Pohjois-Pohjanmaalla (Pre-integration development project in Northern Ostrobothnia region) Practise: Involving asylum Seekers in voluntary conservation and maintenance work.

Contact: National Parks Finland www.metsa.fi/esikoto (in Finnish)

Aim of the practice

Launched in Oulu, the Esikoto project is intended for asylum seekers living across Northern Ostrobothnia Region. The main aim of Parks and Wildlife Finland (P&WF) in Esikoto project is to involve asylum seekers in various nature-based activities. These mostly include recreational outdoor activities; however, asylum seekers have been involved also in voluntary conservation and maintenance work in national parks and other publicly owned nature areas.

The aim of this practice is to include asylum seekers in tangible and versatile work in nature, while waiting on the authorities' decision regarding their asylum applications. While asylum seekers do valuable conservation work outdoors, they at the same time spend time with locals, learn about the new living environment, and gain work experience and language skills.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Voluntary work is in this case carried out in nature, since P&WF mostly manages sites and destinations of natural importance. Natural setting and physical work outdoors is appreciated by the volunteers. Usually, light conservation and maintenance work outdoors provides an opportunity for asylum seekers to volunteer without needing specific working or language skills. Furthermore, working outdoors means acquaintance with nature, and since nature is an important part of the Finnish cultural narrative, this practice enhances also familiarity with Finnish culture and customs.

However, northern environment proposes a challenge for voluntary work outdoors in winter. In Esikoto project, asylum seekers have done work in summer and in winter but practice shows that wintertime does withdraw many otherwise interested volunteers. Apart from coldness, only positive feedback has been received from participants.

Where: Type of environment

Voluntary work has taken place in national parks and other protected areas, and Natura 2000 areas.

What: Activities/practices

The basic idea for including also asylum seekers in voluntary work outdoors comes from P&WF's voluntary work concept - about 75 voluntary work actions are being organized in national parks and other protected areas per year. These are organized by P&WF alone or together with cooperation partners such as WWF, The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and others. These actions can be a day long or even week long voluntary camps. The most common tasks are mowing and clearance work, removal of alien species, correction of fences, and restoration of traditional buildings.

Voluntary work carried out by asylum seekers in the Esikoto project, has been mostly trail maintenance in national parks and clearance work in Natura 2000 areas. These activities have been organized randomly. Not only park staff, also individual locals have implemented working actions with asylum seekers working as volunteers.

Who: Target groups: Asylum seekers, aged 15-65

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

According to the feedback collected via conversation, asylum seekers find this work important because they (can)

- learn about Finnish nature, animal life and outdoor culture
- spent time with locals
- get to know new places
- feel useful by participating in conservation work and by seeing concrete results of their work
- learn new skills
- learn about voluntary work and its importance
- feel good and motivated.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Based on the experience from Esikoto project, voluntary work in nature is considered as a good practice of nature-based integration. Nonetheless there are some bits and pieces that challenge the practice, yet possible to overcome.

Pros

- Important for asylum seekers to spend time away from reception centres
- Enhancing well-being of asylum seekers (feel good after work)
- Empowerment of asylum seekers (participation and engagement with broader community)
- Great importance of asylum seekers' work input for P&WF or others
- Social integration

Cons

- Insurance (organizer needs insurance that covers also asylum seekers. Basic insurances don't necessarily cover this group)
- Workwear (organizer must provide protective work clothing, especially in wintertime)
- Transportation (organizer should arrange transportation to worksite)
- Coordination between organizer and reception centres
- Working ability evaluation of asylum seekers (reception centre staff should help selecting participants; use information, if mapping of interests among asylum seekers has been done)
- Finding common language (might be challenge with some work but not necessarily a barrier)
- Thorough briefing about work (volunteers need to understand what they are volunteering for)

P&WF sees this voluntary work as a win-win situation in nature-based integration. This practice also enhances a two-way integration - society changes as the population becomes more diverse and integration and interaction is always best in everyday situations.



Figure 3. The idea of Esikoto project is to involve asylum seekers in various nature-based activities. In this practice, asylum seekers work in national parks, spend time with locals, learn about the new living environment, gain work experience and improve Finnish language skills. (Photo by Pekka Veteläinen (Metsähallitus). Place: Riisitunturi National Park, Finland).

8. Liikuntavuosi luonnossa project

Contact: Anu Seppälä, Plan International Finland

Aim of the practice

Liikuntavuosi luonnossa -project encourages immigrant children, youth and their parents to enjoy local nature as an environment for exercise and well-being. Multisensory and educational experiences strengthen the participants' relationship with nature and help them integrate into the Finnish culture. The project highlights the participants' relationship with nature and their willingness to protect it. The project collaborates with multiple educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and governmental institutions. The funding is mainly provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The project was part of the Finland 100-centenary in 2017.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

All the activities of Liikuntavuosi luonnossa -project are organized in nature. Nature is an essential part of the Finnish culture, it is a well-known place to exercise and relax. However, this is not always the case with immigrant groups. The knowledge of everyman rights, accessibility to local nature areas, proper clothing in nature, well-being aspects etc. are lacking in immigrant groups. The project aims to answer these questions.

Where: Type of environment

The nature activities, trips, picnics etc. are usually organised in the neighbouring areas, i.e. areas that are as close as possible to the participants' schools and homes. The purpose of this is to lower the threshold to continue the exercising in nature also in the future. However, the activities are organised with customer-oriented principles, and therefore the participants are encouraged to express their opinions, wishes and suggestions concerning the content and location.

What: Activities/practices

Forest walks, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, horseback riding, evening forest trips, allotment cultivation, rowing, orienteering, bird watching etc. just to name some of the activities. All the activities are organised in Finnish and a lot of visual material is used to support the language. The project's best practices will be presented in a multicultural calendar of nature activities.

Who: target groups: Immigrant children, youth and their parents. Mostly children who have been in Finland less than a year.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

There has been almost 800 participants between the project year (April 2017 and April 2018). The feedback is collected from the participants, mostly from the teachers. It has been very positive.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Pros: Project has met its goals; the activities have been successful, the number of participants has been excellent, the participants have been motivated and the content of the trips have been both educational and fun.

Cons: In the future, it would be better to organize multiple trips for the same participants in order to get better data of the effectiveness of the practice.

Challenges: How to include climate change and other topical issues to the activities.



Figure 4. Nature is an essential part of the Finnish culture. In this practice, immigrants had a nature trip, where they could get in touch with the real Finnish winter. (Photo by Anu Seppälä, Plan Finland).

Norway

9. Friluftsliv for minoritetsgrupper

Outdoor recreation for ethnic minority groups

Contact: Midt-Agder Friluftsråd, Per Svein Holte

Aim of the practice

The aim of the practice is to introduce immigrants to outdoor recreation in Norway. First immigrants are introduced to the near-by nature and local geography around the city where they live – through outdoor activities and walking in the near-by nature. This empowers the immigrants in terms of knowledge about the local natural and green environment in terms of how to use the areas, which equipment is needed, as well as which laws and regulations exist that have to be followed. Hereby the immigrants will get knowledge about the Norwegian culture and lifestyle, as outdoor recreation is a fundamental part of the Norwegian lifestyle. The Norwegian Government supports this practice.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature? The aim is to teach Norwegian outdoor recreation, so would not make sense without nature

Where: Type of environment: The practice takes place in all green environments – starting in the near-by urban areas such as green spaces, and then taking the immigrants further to the forests, and the sea – introducing them to different levels of wilderness, starting from the nearby areas ending in the mountains.

What: Activities/practices: Walking groups and outdoor activities

Who: Target groups: Immigrants, asylum seekers, non-western immigrants, immigrant children and their parents

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured? Recording the number of participants

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

The practice has been running since 2002 and has been developed continuously. The immigrants train their language through outdoor recreation and get familiar with the outdoor environments. Another positive side effect is that the parents get familiar with “outdoor recreation” so that they know what their children are doing when being outdoors in school or kindergarten. Participants in this practice learn about nature in general and biology. However, the outdoor organisations are not necessarily ready to take in the newcomers and there are only few Norwegians involved as group leaders. Therefore, there is only limited amount of networking between Norwegians and immigrants.

10. Introduction to outdoor recreation through the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants

Contact: Norsk Friluftsliv, Norway

Aim of the practice

Several of Norsk Friluftsliv's member organizations and their local groups work with the municipalities and their introduction program for immigrants. It is both a right and obligation to participate in the introduction program which includes Norwegian language training and social studies. As part of the introduction program, the Norsk Friluftsliv's member organisations introduce new immigrants to the local nature, outdoor recreation and practices in Norway.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Nature plays a key role and has a positive impact. The practice can be done in blue environment, urban parks etc., but would not be the same in the middle of the city. The idea is to use nature areas close to where the immigrants reside to minimize the barriers of going there on their own later. One of the driving forces of the outdoor activities is also to practice Norwegian. The introduction to outdoor recreation is a great way of enhancing local knowledge amongst the immigrants, introduce them to local customs and organizations, Norwegian culture, and ensure that they get some activity thus enhancing both their mental and physical health.

Where: Type of environment

Depends on the region, the idea is to use nature areas close to where the immigrants reside.

What: Activities/practices

Practicing outdoor recreation is carried out in different ways, depends on the region and member organization. Usually once a week activity during the introduction program.

Who: Target groups

The participants of the obligatory introduction program. The introduction program is for all foreign nationals between 16 and 55 years of age who have a residence permit that forms the basis for a permanent residence permit in Norway. The participants are mostly of non-western origin.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

Counting the number of participants

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Pros

- Captive audience: Taking part in the introduction program is obligatory which brings participants that would not necessarily have been involved otherwise
- Immigrants get knowledge about voluntary organizations and the possibilities within them. Some decide to be active in the organizations later as volunteers which gives them social capital and a network which often also helps them in finding a job later.

- Multiple benefits for the participants: knowledge about local and national culture, language learning, introduction to the organizational scene, mental and physical health

Cons

- Problems in recruiting volunteers: introduction program is during the day, while most volunteers can work during the evening. Thus, the organizations must have volunteers that can participate during the day, or have employees that can take part in the program. Or establish a hike/activity during the afternoon, but then the participants in the program don't have to take part if the municipality hasn't set that as part of the mandatory program.
- It can also be difficult to establish a sustainable partnership with the municipality, and/or convince them that outdoor recreation is a good way to be introduced to your local community and learn the language.

Sweden

11. Skogen som integrationsarena

The forest as an arena for integration

Contact: Ann Dolling, Forest ecology and management, Sveriges lantbrukuniversitet SLU, Sweden

The education is found on this webpage: <https://www.slu.se/samverkan/ny-komputv-yrkesv/nyanlanda/>

Aim of the practice

The aim of the project is that men and women with a different ethnic background than Swedish will gain knowledge about forests and forest-related activities and thus an increased understanding of the forest and their importance for the Swedish society. The practice introduces the forest to immigrants and enhances social interaction with people in rural areas. Especially people living in the rural areas use the forest for recreation. The practice provides knowledge about a new area and sector that often doesn't exist in the countries where the immigrants come from. However, forestry is one of the large sectors that provides jobs and income to Sweden. Hence, the project introduces a new path to jobs. The project group has representatives from the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, the municipality of Dorotea, the upper secondary school for agriculture in Burträsk and SLU.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature? The project is about forests and forestry and cannot be performed elsewhere than in the forest.

Where: Type of environment: The boreal forest in the county in Västerbotten.

What: Activities/practices: The project has developed simple education about forest and the forestry sector that can be used in Swedish language education for immigrants (SFI Swedish For Immigrants). The Swedish language education for immigrants starts from the day when the immigrant gets a permanent permit and lasts for at the most two years. The forestry education is available on internet and is used in combination with study visits to the forest and forest education and companies.

Who: Target groups: Immigrants with a resident permit

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured? Number of participants that have become interested of forest and forestry. Measured by a questionnaire.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

The project introduces a new business area and acts as an introduction to countryside living (the small municipalities need more residents). Spending time being and doing things in the forest improve language learning. However, the project starts too late in the "integration chain". It would be better to start already in the asylum period. The project has no connection with the employment agency. The contact with the employment agency starts after the period of Swedish for immigrants.

12. Biotopias Äventyrsgrupp

Contact: Maria Brandt, Biotopia, Sweden

www.biotopia.nu/aventyrgruppen

Aim of the practice

Aim is to contribute to integration of young immigrants through organizing nature and outdoor activities in and around Uppsala. Äventyrsgrupp introduces a wide range of different activities in or about nature in order to make the participants find their own favourites, thus creating future interests or hobbies. Different organizations, groups or individuals helping out with activities show the participants that these activities also exist “outside” the project and how to continue the activities in an established Swedish group for kayaking, birdwatching, climbing, hiking etc. or on their own with friends.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

All the activities are focused on nature and being out in nature. The participants learn about the important rights and possibilities in nature and nature in Sweden, about Swedish culture and how to be a part of the society. Nature offers a lot to do that does not demand talking all the time and a lot of situations where talking can be on a very basic level i.e. cooperation around some practical task or commenting things we actually see and experience. This makes it easy for people to meet, also with different levels of knowledge in Swedish.

Where: Type of environment

Forests, lakes, rivers, archipelago and sometimes in the Biotopia museum

What: Activities/practices

The activities and events have been everything from building nestboxes for birds and placing them in the forest to kayaking, climbing, hiking, wild life safari with deer and moose, wood carving, outdoor cooking, drawing animals, camping, looking for frogs etc. There have been about 60 arranged events for Biotopias Äventyrsgrupp since February-December 2017.

In order to reach as many as possible from the target group, Biotopia has an activity in two parts for language introduction groups in secondary school. The activity starts with an guided tour in the museum on basics about the nature of Uppland/Sweden and some common animals. We also do an exercise about the right of public access (*Allemansrätten*) and Swedish nature. The second part of the activity is maybe a week later. Then we go out walking in a forest, looking at nature, making fire for cooking coffee and playing some nature bingo based on the new nature words we practiced. When we do the outdoor part of the activity, we also invite them to join Äventyrsgrupp as a voluntary continuation on the same theme.

Who: Target groups

Youth (15-25 years) who newly arrived Sweden (*nya i Sverige*) and are not yet familiar with Swedish nature and outdoor activities. Also some Swedish youth have joined for many of the activities and the aim is to have a more “mixed” Äventyrsgrupp next year.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

Counting the number of participants: There are more than 100 members in the Äventyrsgrupp's Facebook group and about 40 individuals who have participated more than once. New participants arrive frequently, participants like and share posts on Facebook and Instagram. The most active participants are now very familiar with outdoor cooking, hiking, ice-skating and kayaking and are able to help the new ones. Participants have been persevering when it comes to experiences outdoors. No matter if it is dark or cold or wet - they stay positive.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

- Captive audience as possibility to spread information: participants to the group are recruited through schools which is a good way to reach the target group. However, after the orientation it is a bit unclear how the information of the activities reaches the target group.
- Not having fixed groups, but participants can choose the activities they participate in: Different activities attract different individuals. Some of the participants come for only on a certain kind of activity, which is why it is good that the participants do not need to sign up for everything. Varying number of participants gives Biotopia the opportunity to do things together with a larger number of youth than if it had been a fixed group. Sometimes, however, not having fixed groups makes it difficult to estimate how many participants will come and create the feeling of being a group.
- Unbalanced participation of different genders. Very few girls have participated in the activities. This may be not only due to more boys coming as refugees, but also due to the fact that the activities are outdoors and many activities are a bit demanding physically. (We have started a group for girls now that will have some activities in spring 2018, and hopefully join the Äventyrsgrupp later)
- Potential lack of continuity mentally challenging. Participants are newly arrived and they take part in the activities while waiting for their residence permit decision. Not knowing if one can stay in the country is mentally challenging for both the participants and the instructors. However, for the participants the activities out in the nature can provide a much needed break from everyday life.
- Logistics are important. The experience has taught that it is better to meet at Biotopia and go to the bus stop together than to have different meeting places every time.

13. Natur för alla – Nature for everyone

Contact: Peter Ahlqvist, Dorotea municipality, Sweden

<https://www.dorotea.se/utbildning-och-barnomsorg/vuxenutbildning/projekt/natur-foer-alla/>

Aim of the practice

- Introduce the forest to immigrants
- Enhance social interaction with people in rural areas
- Protect nature
- Make nature more accessible for different target groups, such as immigrants
- Provide options for immigrants that make them interested to stay and settle down in rural areas
- Provide nature-based activities which may improve the self-esteem and show the opportunities to an enriched leisure time

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature? The forest is the medium for outdoor activities.

Where: Type of environment: Forest

What: Activities/practices

Nature activities such as hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, berry/mushroom picking and skiing. The project also has its own “school forest” where the participants learn about forests, trees, plants, animals and so on. They are also building sheds, tables, campfires and duckboards in wet areas. Responsible for the activities is the project, which cooperates with different associations in the municipality of Dorotea, i.e. the hunting association, fishing association, the local snow mobile club, the local skiing association etc.

Who: Target groups: Immigrants with a resident permit

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured? Number of participants that have taken part in the project

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Nature has a positive impact on language learning and social interactions. It is, however, hard to know how long the immigrants (studying Swedish) will stay in the municipality. As they are entitled to move to another place, some of them may not participate long enough to gain positive effects of the project. Depending on the participant’s previous skills, we have noticed that different information is needed for different groups, before going out in nature. Both project leaders and immigrants participating in the project are time optimists and think that they will be able to teach and learn more and to produce more things in the school forest. Weather and season are other factors that postpone activities.

14. What do our newcomers know about the countryside?

Contact: Yusra Moshtat, Anders Bengtsson, Ann Dolling, the Swedish rural network for integration, Sweden

<http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/vadarlandsbygdsnatverket/verksamhetsomraden/integration.4.7f2f685151ec2c8738d485e.html>

Aim of the practice

The aim of the project is to show young immigrants (unaccompanied children in the upper teenage), living in the cities, the countryside and nature. The aim is also to learn more about young immigrants' knowledge about the Swedish countryside, find out more about their background as well as attempt to identify their dreams and visions for the future.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature? To give insight about the Swedish countryside and nature in the countryside. There is no countryside without nature.

Where: Type of environment: First in an urban area and then in a rural area to show the infrastructure in the countryside and the businesses that dominate in rural areas; forestry, agriculture, gardening

What: Activities/practices: Study visits to the countryside, farms and upper secondary schools for agriculture

Who: Target groups: Young immigrants (in the upper teenage) without parents in Sweden.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

- **Result:** Several of the immigrants were interested to live in small place even if they came from a large city. However, their knowledge about the Swedish rural areas is scarce. It is important that the activities are made together with the immigrants and not for them. It is more of exchange of experiences where we as adults and integrated Swedes learn about our young newcomers' dreams and thoughts at the same time as they learn about Swedish nature, countryside and rural activities out of our perspective.
- **Measures:** Number of participants that participated and questionnaire about background, knowledge about rural areas in Sweden and dreams for the future.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

- **Pros:** It is a different approach to most other nature-based integration activities as it is a two way communication where different groups learn from each other. Most other activities emanate from the concept of stuffing the knowledge about nature and Nordic culture into a large numbers of immigrants.
- **Cons:** It is a short activity into which you have to put quite a lot effort before it comes into being.

15. Hi Stranger! (Hej Främling!)

Contact: Hej Framling; “Hi Stranger” is an association that started in the Region of Jämtland but activities and subgroups have successively started in towns and cities in many parts of Sweden. <http://www.hejframling.se>

Aim of the practice

The initiative aims at improving integration by making new and old Swedes meet and do activities together. It is based on volunteers offering activities within sports, cultural activities and outdoor recreation, and the activities should be free of costs for the participants. The overall aim is a sustainable society with physical and mental wellbeing among citizens.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

The nature is not necessarily a precondition for the activities. However, the nature is free to access, and since the activities should be without costs to the participants, the nature is an obvious choice for activities. The activities depend on the interests of the volunteers (and the participants). The activities therefore vary between areas/towns/cities. The asylum seekers (and newcomers) are distributed all over Sweden. The activities in nature help the newcomers to see other sides of their new country than just the town, where there are located. E.g. in Östersund, the “Hi Stranger” activities in the surrounding nature have improved newcomers’ attachment to the area. Along with the social relations, this might get more newcomers to stay in smaller societies instead of moving to Stockholm or some of the big cities.

Where: Type of environment: The activities can take place in many different settings. Nature is an attractive setting because it is free to go there and it is easy to arrange activities there, but, as mentioned above, the choice of location depends on the volunteers.

What: Activities/practices: Often sports and outdoor recreation e.g. running, dog walking, skiing, but it can be all sorts of activities. The activities focus on participating, socializing and having fun rather than competing.

Who: Target groups: All are welcome to participate.

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured? The “Hi Stranger!” has spread out to many towns/cities/areas. A more professional organization has been setup to support the volunteers and the development of new activities. They recruit new volunteers and inform about activities through the internet and use for social media. They collect means for supporting activities from companies or private persons.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

The activities create better social bonding and attachment to areas (and the nature). The experience from Östersund is that newcomers tend to stay there more frequently instead of moving to Stockholm or other big cities. “They have learned to love the nature”

Pros

- The nature is free of costs and accessible for everyone
- It is easy to arrange activities in the nature
- The activities (in the nature) provide attachment to an area

16. Nature conservation and integration

Contact: Therese Ludwig, Skogsstyrelsen Skåne Region, Sweden

Aim of the practice

The overall aim is vocational training and nature conservation. The initiative aims at sustainable nature conservation as well as vocational training of immigrants and locals for entering the Swedish labour market. It is based on joint work between the Swedish Employment Office, the Forestry commission in Skåne county and Länsstyrelsen in Skåne county.

Why is nature important in this practice? What is the role of nature?

Nature conservation and related work task is used for vocational training of immigrants and long term unemployed Swedish residents. Nature is the arena and the base for education, language learning, cultural enhance and vocational training with the aim of sustainable integration to the labour market – hence nature-based vocational training and integration.

Where: Type of environment

The activities (work tasks) take place at nature conservation sites in Skåne County.

What: Activities/practices

All task and work related to nature conservation.

Who: Target groups: Immigrants with residence permit and long term unemployed Swedish residence (locals).

Results of the practice and how the success has been measured?

The practice is under evaluation carried out by researchers at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU and the Forest Research in UK.

Lessons learned: What were the pros and cons? What are the challenges?

Under evaluation.

Nature-based solutions are an efficient way to address simultaneously environmental, economic and social problems especially in urban areas. In the Nordic countries, there has been increasing interest in nature-based integration and a number of practical projects and initiatives have been launched to promote the benefits of nature in integration. This report presents the lessons learned and experiences gathered in these practices. 16 descriptions practices from Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway are described in more detail to illustrate the various ways nature is used for integration across the Nordic countries.



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES AND
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



ISBN 978-952-11-4945-0 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-952-11-4946-7 (PDF)

ISSN 1796-1718 (print)

ISSN 1796-1726 (online)