

Stockholm wants to take advantage of engagement and build togetherness

Stockholm's annual budget constitutes a central governance document in the rights work being conducted. The budget states that the city shall work to promote human rights and actively oppose discrimination. Stockholm's residents are to have an influence and participate in the development of the city, which should provide the conditions for better decisions and activities, as well as more sustainable solutions. Specific goals in the human rights area are continuously monitored through indicators in the form of questions about perceived discrimination in the city's user surveys. The outcome of the indicators is used as a basis for the city's various operations to be able to develop and prioritize effective measures against discrimination.

Since the occurrence of discrimination affects access to human rights, the principle of non-discrimination is a theme that ties together the work of Stockholm on rights. The work is to affect all areas of activity in the city. In order to systematize the city's efforts, ECCAR's ten-point program¹ is applied in which an important point is involvement. The City of Stockholm has, in recent years, raised the level of ambition regarding citizen participation and influence within the city. The city district committees have begun extensive development work on strengthening local democracy through, for example, various forms of dialogue with residents/citizens.

The purpose of the dialogues is to:

- o Take advantage of engagement
- o Provide a basis for development of the operations and better quality
- o Increase participation and provide an opportunity for influence between elections
- o Build a sense of togetherness in the local community and increase trust

¹ European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR). The 10-point program can be found at <https://www.eccar.info/en>

Beyond these more general objectives concerning participation, there are specific initiatives concerning non-discrimination and equality. Since 2016 Stockholm has been one of the country's five development municipalities for Roma inclusion. The development municipalities have been commissioned by the national government to work specifically on the long lasting structures that affect and limit access by Roma to human rights. The development work should also aim to promote the rights of Roma as a national minority. When Stockholm undertook the task as a development municipality, the target group was included through a hearing with Roma representatives. These representatives were involved in formulating the description of the problem and prioritizing measures based on the group's needs and interests. Roma emphasized the importance of city action against discrimination and anti-gypsyism. Training initiatives aimed at city employees to increase the city's knowledge of barriers affecting Roma's access to human rights were pointed out as being necessary. Furthermore, the importance of the city taking measures that promote the rights of Roma to social care and welfare, security, education and the labor market was emphasized.

The *pursuit of rights* is an initiative that aims at several of these goals. Here, young people, based on the central human rights principles of participation and inclusion, are involved in the city's work for equality and against discrimination. The *pursuit of rights* is a summer job initiative that is carried out at the city's office for human rights.

The pursuit of rights - Roma inclusion and non-discrimination

Since 2015, Stockholm has been carrying out an initiative aimed at strengthening young people through a focus on human rights and the conditions for developing effective organizations. The basic idea is to put young people's empowerment and initiatives into focus. As part of the implementation, young people in 2017 had the opportunity to apply for a "pursuit of rights" summer job. The task of the summer workers was to produce films and other tools that can be used in the city's competence development concerning human rights. For three weeks, the young people, based on a

knowledge of racism and anti-gypsyism from a historical and contemporary perspective, were able to develop tools that serve the purpose of strengthening Stockholm's human rights. One of the city's bridge builder employees, an employee with Roma language and cultural expertise, was engaged to encourage young Roma to seek the jobs.

The summer workers received training in the form of lectures, films, museum visits and discussions based on educational materials concerning violations of human rights. The work also involved continuously reflecting on how the prohibition of discrimination is linked to human rights, and which mechanisms contribute to violating or strengthening human rights. The work of the young people resulted in a number of short films reflecting experiences and reflections on structural racism, prejudice, anti-gypsyism and sexism. The films also show measures that counteract racism and discrimination in municipal activities. These are used in the city's human rights training efforts. The summer workers also produced a city map with five places in the city that show a Roma presence from a historical and contemporary perspective as well as a citizen's proposal on the establishment of a memorial site. The city map is a training material that is used in the city to demonstrate violations of the rights of the Roma from a historical and contemporary perspective. The city map is even used as a basis for city walks.

Link to human rights and a rights-based approach

The Roma are one of Sweden's five national minorities. This entails a responsibility for the city to work actively to ensure the group's rights, and Stockholm also has a national government commission to develop and work for Roma inclusion. Naturally people who belong to a national minority group are also entitled to the same rights as all other people - provisions that have been incorporated or ratified by Sweden in relation to treaties such as the European Convention or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, the Roma, together with Sweden's other national minorities, the Sami, the Jews, the Swedish Finns, and the Tornedalers, are covered by the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The Council of Europe believes that anti-gypsyism is deeply rooted in Europe and that the discrimination to which Roma are exposed means that the ability of Roma to define the lives they wish to lead is severely limited. With the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Sweden has, among other things, undertaken by law to ensure that:

- National minorities shall be given the opportunity to influence issues that concern them. Consultations shall take place as far as possible.
- All public activities are responsible for protecting and promoting the national minority languages and facilitating the development of the cultures.
- The right of children to develop their culture and their language, as well as the right of the elderly to service and care with a special emphasis on personnel who know the minority language.

In addition to issue of minority rights, there is a ban on discrimination in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The pursuit of rights initiative covers human rights in several stages. The participation and inclusion approach in itself entails a rights-based approach, since the target group is involved in several steps, for example, problem formulation and prioritization of efforts. In this, the city's goal is also to work on non-discrimination and Roma inclusion, which in itself constitutes a rights objective in the form of compliance with the prohibition of discrimination and the safeguarding of minority rights. The initiative itself can also be regarded as a step towards fulfilling the target group's right to work, as regulated by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Finally, the pursuit of rights initiative provides additional benefits since the material produced by the young people is used to educate the city's employees about human rights.