

Municipality of Klippan – against discrimination and for equal rights

During 2018 the municipality of Klippan initiated work with a systematic implementation of human rights. The background to this work is found in the survey of rights commissioned by the municipality's administration managers, with the municipality director having primary responsibility. The purpose of the survey was to provide a current analysis of the work for diversity, inclusion, equal rights and anti-discrimination, a work that is being carried out in order to achieve better fulfillment of politically set goals within the field of gender equality and diversity. Through the use of a rights-based approach, the survey highlighted how the municipality has succeeded in the task of helping to fulfill the human rights of its inhabitants. The survey also examined whether the municipality does this on an equal basis and without distinction between people. Furthermore, the municipality is examined in its role as an employer where the employees' experiences as well as knowledge concerning discrimination were the central aspects that were examined.

A Rights-based approach to the survey

In order to apply a systematic approach, the survey work was divided in accordance with the grounds of discrimination found in the Swedish Discrimination Act:

- Gender
- Gender identity or expression
- Ethnicity
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

In addition to the statutory discrimination grounds, the survey examined whether other structures such as socio-economic status and level of education could affect an individual's rights and opportunities. In addition, Klippan applies an intersectional perspective, which means that there is an ongoing analysis of how different discriminatory structures interact. For the survey, three different methods of material collection were used:

- Document analysis - governance documents and regulations are examined, together with statistics from Kolada (the local government data bank) and data from previous employee surveys and user surveys.
- Focus group studies - a smaller group of people are brought together who, after receiving a review of the subject under structured forms, answer and discuss selected issues, after which the answers are documented and analyzed. For the survey, 10 focus groups and a supplementary interview were carried out. The participants consisted of municipal employees in various positions, local politicians, pupils, residents in retirement homes, people with a right to personal assistance, representatives of associations that work closely with groups that can be linked to the grounds of discrimination as well as the general public.
- Questionnaire surveys - surveys aimed at employees with questions about the municipality of Klippan as a workplace and one aimed at the general public asking about how the residents experience the municipality.

The ambition with the survey was that the three central rights principles on non-discrimination, participation and transparency would permeate the entire survey process and that people, regardless of their identity and circumstances, would be given a chance to be heard. A continual work with participation was a priority in the survey process, which meant that the experiences, thoughts and opinions of municipal employees and residents were central to the analysis. Furthermore, there was an ongoing effort in the survey to communicate the work and provide feedback on its results to those who participated as well as those who are affected, i.e. outreach to all municipality employees and residents in order to achieve transparency.

The results of the survey and the work going forward

The survey brings into focus many of the problem areas in the municipality, among other things, discrimination experienced in relation to all of the discrimination

grounds, the lack of responsiveness by the municipality to civil society as well as problems with islamophobia, a strongly exclusionary heteronorm and the lack of visibility of transgender people. The lack of knowledge about the issues also became apparent, together with a confirmation that the problems that national investigations on discrimination demonstrate are found and are a reality in Klippan municipality. The work resulted in a report that concludes with a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the shortcomings that became apparent during the survey process. The measures proposed include a review of the governance and policy documents concerning the integration of a human rights perspective, the development of an accessibility inventory concerning the municipality's properties and website, a review of the recruitment procedures and governing documents that regulate recruitment in order to ensure that all recruitment becomes competence-based and non-discriminatory, and education/training for all of the municipality's employees with the goal of increasing knowledge about the Discrimination Act and a rights perspective.

The survey, and above all the parts that concerned participation of the target groups, also indicated specific areas where there is a need for targeted efforts to counteract discrimination and prevent other rights violations. In addition to the shortcomings of the municipality as a welfare service provider, deficiencies became apparent concerning the municipality as an employer. Concerning the development of a systematic work from the inside out, it was decided that the focus in 2018 would be on the recommendations in the survey aimed at strengthening the internal capacity of the municipality. This is done based on the belief that an increase in competence internally will also lead to positive effects in the delivery of welfare services. This internal focus leads to a work on the municipality's role as an employer, among other things, based on the human rights platform of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR).

Link to human rights

Already in its approach to the survey, Klippan links the municipality's ability to guarantee residents access to human rights without distinction related to the grounds

of discrimination, with attractiveness and population growth. The municipality makes an important point in this; a rights-based approach not only brings benefits in the form of increased fulfillment of human rights, but also results in other positive values. These are values such as increased trust in institutions through transparency, improved legal certainty through equal treatment, and the municipality as a more attractive employer with a clear non-discriminatory approach. These, in turn, can lead to a greater diversity of job seekers, businesses and residents that are attracted to the municipality.

The work on the survey and the ambition of quality enhancement in the rights work that it entails naturally encompasses a wide range of human rights, particularly the prohibition of discrimination, which is a central principle in each of the documents concerning rights. Working with a rights perspective without starting from a non-discriminatory approach is not feasible as these two assume each other. Klippan's survey work highlighted deficiencies in this area and, above all, a lack of knowledge concerning discrimination issues was revealed. The municipality's employees repeatedly highlighted the need for skills enhancement and space for discussing these issues in relation to their daily lives and activities. Based on the needs formulated by the personnel, a decision was made that all of the municipality's approximately 1,500 employees during 2018 would receive a basic education on the Discrimination Act and its linkage to various rights issues, the municipality's core values and the profession involved. That the incentive for the education initiative largely comes from the organization itself as well as the formulation of the problems is a clear indication of the importance of participation as one of the central principles in a rights-based approach. Through the use of a rights-based approach, Klippan can gain increased trust through transparency and improved legal certainty through equal treatment. In addition, using a clear non-discriminatory approach, the municipality can become a more attractive employer and a better place to live.