



Botkyrka – Växjö:

Summary of the situation analysis

1. Introduction into the local situation

1.1 Political structure of the cities

The Swedish municipalities have a high degree of autonomy for what concerns local self-government. This means that political decisions and responsibilities are taken at a local level. Taking for example the city of Växjö, the city council takes decisions on issues such as policy initiatives, setting the local budget and service provision. These decisions are **carried** out by the executive, the city's government. In order to handle the entire amount of work, the council is assisted by a number of politically appointed boards that specialize in various areas.

1.2 Composition of the local population

The current official term used in Sweden to refer to migrants and migration-related issues has been introduced in 1999. The older terms "immigrants" and "foreigner" have been replaced by "foreign background" (*utländsk bakgrund*). Within this new concept are included both residents born in another country and those born in Sweden by two parents which are foreign-born. This means that mixed Swedes are excluded from it.

Botkyrka Municipality

Botkyrka is located in the south western part of the Greater Stockholm area, which is called Southern Greater Stockholm. In March 2011, Botkyrka population stood at 83,184 people, what makes of Botkyrka the 23rd biggest city in Sweden. Furthermore, Botkyrka is the Swedish municipality with the highest proportion of inhabitants with a foreign background, with a rate of 53,2 % in 2010. Residents with a foreign background are concentrated in the northern part of the municipality (Norra Botkyrka), which is both geographically and psychologically separated from the southern part of the municipality, mostly populated by Swedish-born people. The foreign background population in Botkyrka is dominated by non-Western minorities. A total number of 35 different countries of origin are represented. In absolute numbers, the ten biggest foreign background-groups in Botkyrka are Turkey, Finland, Iraq, Syria, Chile, Poland, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Iran and Pakistan. The municipality of Botkyrka has the lowest income level per capita in Greater Stockholm and the highest unemployment rate.

Växjö Municipality

Växjö had a population of 83,000 inhabitants in 2010. The proportion of residents with foreign background in 2010 stand in Växjö at 18,6 %, that is 15,400 citizens. Its favourable geographical location in the South of Sweden and the great educational opportunities it offers, have also fostered the economic development.

1.3 Local history of migration

Between 1950-75, the so-called record years of the Swedish economy, an intense labour immigration took place in Botkyrka. Firstly, in 1950s and 1960s, Botkyrka received immigrants from Nordic and



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European countries, such as Finland, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece and Germany. Afterwards, from the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, also Turks and Turkish Kurds and Christian minorities from Syria and Lebanon migrated to Botkyrka. In particular, the vast majority migrated to the newly-constructed housing units in the North of Botkyrka. In the 1970s and 1980s, labour immigration was replaced by refugee immigration, with immigrants coming from Chile, Colombia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, China, Afghanistan, Morocco, Ethiopia, Poland, Bosnia and Russia as well. But it is with the 1980s and the 1990s that non-Western immigration definitely took over.

1.4 Attitudes towards vulnerable groups

According to the latest citizen's survey, there are about 10,000 inhabitants that suffer from discrimination. While the largest ethnic groups present in the city are from Turkey (9, 5 %), Finland (5, 8 %) and Iraq (4, 4 %), the largest group at risk of discrimination are the inhabitants from the African countries (5, 5 %) and those from the countries in the Middle East (19, 8%). These inhabitants constitute 25, 3% of the population. Due to difficulties in collecting statistics of inhabitants later than first or second generation of immigrants, the actual figures of people suffering from discrimination is higher than this.

Furthermore, the northern area of Botkyrka municipality is widely known across Sweden for its high rate of foreign background population. It is also object of political debates and it appears frequently in the media, where its buildings and housing estates are treated and labeled as non-white and lower-class ghettos.

2. Situation of people with foreign background in the following fields:

2.1 Political and social participation

Political and social participation on the national level – right to vote

The right to vote in Sweden is limited to Swedish citizens who have reached the age of 18 and who are registered residents in Sweden. This all apply to national elections as well as to elections of city councils and municipal councils. The same conditions hold for citizens of EU, Iceland and Norway. Other foreign citizens have the right to vote if they have been registered residents in Sweden for a continuous period of three years before Election Day.

Political and social participation in Botkyrka

Botkyrka has usually been governed by the Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party, SAP. Even if administrations at a national level and Stockholm County administration are governed by the alliance of the four traditional bourgeois parties, Botkyrka local government has a fair level of autonomy in political decisions. Indeed, Swedish local governments have a high degree of autonomy in relation to the state and county governments if compared with many other countries. In 2010, the Swedish Democrats submitted an explicit anti-immigration program; its constituency is based in the southern part of the municipality. The Social Democrats still govern Botkyrka after the elections in 2010, but the right-wing populism with an anti-immigration rhetoric has a strong foothold in Botkyrka.

2.2 Housing and residential segregation

During the 1950s, the Swedish government launched the so-called Million Program in order to build a million houses and to face the shortage of housing. The aim was not to build social housing, but to build good houses for everybody.



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Housing and residential segregation - Botkyrka

Northern Botkyrka was constructed as part of the Million Program. The vast majority of the foreign background population of Botkyrka live in the northern districts of the municipality: Fittja (90, 5%), Alby (79, 1%) and Hallunda-Norsborg (73%). Here those of non-Western origin dominate. Since the 1990s, Northern Botkyrka has been target for the Swedish policy aimed at combating housing segregation and unemployment. Within the Swedish urban policy, local development agreements have been signed between the government and 21 municipalities and relative districts. Botkyrka is part of them. The Swedish urban policy provides among others the municipalities with updated statistics.

Housing and residential segregation - Växjö

The Växjö district Araby is one of the so-called “million program areas”. The shortage of housing the million program was addressed to, shifted to a surplus of houses in the 80s and 90s. Meanwhile, flows of refugees came to Sweden as a consequence of the Balkan conflict, and the Araby million program houses were used to accommodate them. The rent of the apartments in Araby is relatively low and Araby is still nowadays an area with high levels of unemployment and an high percentage of households receiving social allowance.

The city of Växjö has started a program in order to improve the living conditions in Araby. This program is focused on three main points: efforts to improve the individual welfare, efforts to make the area more attractive and efforts to decrease the housing/ residential segregation in the city of Växjö.

2.3 Job market

The reduction of immigrant unemployment has been considered a key objective in Swedish public debate in order to reduce segregation and discrimination. People from countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East have the highest unemployment rate. Concerning Botkyrka and Växjö, discrimination does not only regard the access to the job market, but also the contact with colleagues, employers and clients. People with foreign background and also their children found it difficult to establish themselves on the labour market. Usually, such exclusion is justified by stating that foreign background people have insufficient qualification. However, people with foreign background who has a university degree find it also difficult to obtain a qualified employment: only 40 % of them succeed in it.

3. Local stakeholders in Botkyrka and Växjö – their approaches and strategies to prevent and combat racism

3.1.1 Public administration: Botkyrka

On June 17, 2010 the Botkyrka Municipality decided for a strategy for an intercultural municipality free from discrimination. Its objective was that of shifting from the present situation, in which different social groups live together but ignore each other, to an intercultural society characterised by interactions between groups. This means that they should interact to achieve joint goals. Botkyrka is member of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR). The associated cities cooperate to identify and combat racism and discrimination. The actions to be taken comprehend: information and preventive action to counteract conflicts and hate-crimes involving racism and discrimination; the development of an interaction with local actors to obtain a reliable picture of the



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situation; promoting equal opportunities with regard to schooling and higher education; active work against discrimination within the cultural and recreational sector.

3.1.2 Public administration: Växjö

The Växjö Municipality has passed in November 2009 the Diversity Programme 2009-2014, which draws on the Swedish Discrimination Act. The Swedish Discrimination Act aims at combating discrimination and at promoting equal rights. The Diversity Programme is aimed at encouraging participation and dialogue with citizens, involving them in the Municipality's activities; strengthening the dialogue with local stakeholders; combating racism and segregation and reducing housing segregation.

3.2.1 NGOs/ community organisations (civil society) – Botkyrka

In Botkyrka there are two NGOs that work against racism and discrimination: the Antidiscrimination Bureau South and the OPAD (Organisation for Poverty Alleviation and Development – Say no to discrimination). Another important association is the Botkyrka Youth Council, which has a special ECCAR group. Furthermore, other associations and organisations are concerned with antidiscrimination and antiracism. In two Botkyrka districts- Alby and Hallunda-Norsborg, Association Councils are present, in which representatives of all the associations work together for common aims. This is an effective way of working for social cohesion.

3.2.2 NGOs/ community organisations (civil society) – Växjö

There is a wide number of non-governmental organisations in Växjö directed to prevent and combat racism and discrimination. Among them, "Ditt fria val" is a project designed in order to work with young people about democracy, participation, human rights, antiracism and antidiscrimination. Moreover, "Integration in Sweden" is directed to increase the numbers of people with foreign background and other vulnerable groups on the labour market. Furthermore, there are immigrant organisations and centres for people with foreign background.¹

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