

Grow Together!

There has been a lot of refugees coming to Sweden through the years. In the last years it has been people mainly from the middle east (i.a .Syria) and Afghanistan. Our history with refugees in East Vättern Scarp landscape biosphere reserve started in 2015. In the beginning the new refugees lived in former hotels and schools. A rather boring environment. We wanted to help them and create a better connection between the new Sweden residents and people who have lived here all their life. We also wanted to help our new inhabitants with the new language. This is why we decided to start a project we call Grow Together!



By fortune there was a group of refugees very good in acting and they were also entrepreneurs. They made a play about their experience as refugees called Refugee Story. It told us about how they were struggling through deserts and over the sea to reach a better, safer life. We helped this group to do a tour through our area to play this production. Many people came to see it! It was a very good start to have talks about the refugees situation and to connect people with each other.



One way to get to know each other is to have "walk and talk". Sometimes we have arranged it as a special event and in other cases it has been within our ordinary program. We made it possible for the refugees to come to these activities and they have had good opportunities to talk swedish during the walk. It was also a good introduction to swedish nature and our biosphere area. After the walk we had traditional "fika", coffe and cakes, together.

We also cooperate with the schools in the area. A class of students (approx 16 years old refugees) took part in a sheep farmers life and all the job that have to be made during a whole year. It opened up a lot of discussions about strange swedish words and a lot of fun incidents!



Our plans for the future in this ongoing work is to keep up the good work and network. One challenge is to find a good way to match the new refugees with possible employment. We think the countryside can attract new people.

We also have discussions about how we can show the way to the biosphere reserve and outdoor life in a new way, to attract new audiences. People who are not used to outdoor activities, what do they want to know when they step in to a biosphere reserve?

We see these activities as one way towards social sustainability in our biosphere reserve.

Feel free to ask questions and to tell your own experiences of your work with refugees!

Contact:

Manne Ryttman e-mail: m.ryttman@gmail.com

Josefin Gustafsson e-mail: josefine.gustafsson@ostravatterbranterna.se