



# Language is the House we Live in

## Nordic seminar on multilingualism

21.9.2017

8:30-16:00

Godsbanen

Skovgaardsgade 3

Århus, Denmark

Language plays a central role in the Nordic collaboration. Good understanding of Nordic and Scandinavian languages promotes contact, sense of community and mobility between people in the Nordic countries. Yet, in the Nordic countries of today, many more languages are spoken and many people are bilingual or multilingual.

The literary field in the Nordic region is also becoming more diverse and an increasing number of writers write books in other languages than the Nordic ones. The growing multilingualism offers possibilities as well as challenges. The Norwegian Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017 supports that we take the discussions further and dig into solutions of potential barriers, taking thus further the questions raised by the Finnish Presidency in 2015.

In the seminar, we will learn about the current situation of multilingualism in the Nordic countries – both as a demographic fact and as an issue to consider at the literary field. Institutions in the Nordic countries that work with multilingualism or have included multilingualism in their practices will present their solutions. We will also discuss multilingualism within educational practices and multilingualism in cultural politics, such as the Nordic literary prize, readers' access to books in their mother tongue and translation policies.

The seminar is part of Nordic language festival ([Nordisk Sprogfest](#)), included in the programme of Århus as the European capital of culture 2017.

Organizers: Nordic language coordination and the project *Multilingualism and Diversity as a Resource in the Cultural Field* (Culture for All). The event is part of the Norden 2020 priority project.

Registrations to: [sprogfest@fnfnorden.org](mailto:sprogfest@fnfnorden.org)

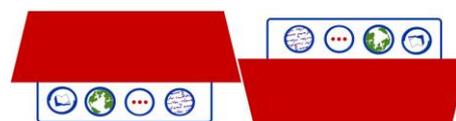
More information, updates for get-together before and after the seminar from Outi Korhonen [outi.korhonen@cultureforall.fi](mailto:outi.korhonen@cultureforall.fi), tel +358405946596

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## Programme

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## THEME I: Language politics and multilingual literature in the Nordic countries

8:30–9:00 Registration and coffee

9:00–9:20 Opening words

Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research 2017: Åse Vøllo (NO)

Nordisk Sprogkoordination, Birthe Lien (NO)

9:20–10:00 Multilingualism in the Nordic countries, linguist Mikael Parkvall (SE)

Researcher Mikael Parkvall from Stockholm University tells about the language situation in Sweden.

Which languages are spoken as mother languages in Sweden today, by how many people and where?

How do the statistics of different minority and immigrant languages differ? Why are there no statistics on the mother languages of the citizens in most Nordic countries?

10:00–10:30 Findings and updates of two reports made by *Multilingualism and Diversity as a Resource in the Cultural Field*. Presented by Outi Korhonen (FI), Culture for all

- Wandering Words: Comparisons of the Position of Non-dominant Language Writers in Nordic Organizations (Outi Korhonen & Rita Paqvalén 2016)

- A View of the Conditions of Arabic Literature in the Nordic Region (Ahmed Al-Nawas 2017)

10:30-11:00 Comment by Jasim Mohamed (SE); poet and translator, coordinator of Bagdad Café project, followed by comments from the audience

11:00–11:20 Break

11:20–12:30 Panel discussion: Nordic language policies related to Nordic literature prize, publishing and translation.

Confirmed participants:

- Elisabeth Friis (DK), expert of multilingual literature and member of the Nordic literature prize jury
- Jasim Mohamed (SE), writer, translator and the coordinator of Baghdad Café literary project
- Petronella Zetterlund (SE), NoLitChX (Nordic Literatures in Change and Exchange)
- Moderator: Rita Paqvalén (FI), director of Culture for All,

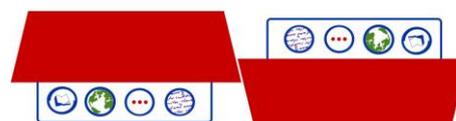
12:30–13:30 Lunch (at participants' own cost)

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## THEME II: Reading promotion of multilingual literature



13:30-14:30 Case examples

13.30–13.45 A region that reads and writes. Anisur Rahman (SE) presents some of the work formats of Litteraturcentrum Uppsala, a platform that promotes reading and writing in collaboration with ICORN-writers, other writers and readers of the region and local institutions where new texts can create other forms of culture.

13.45–14:00 Talking books in Arabic and Sámi. The libraries of the visually impaired people of different Nordic countries produced collaboratively talking books in Arabic and Sámi languages for the members of these old and new language minorities who have special needs regarding written text. Kristina Passad, IFLA (SE) and Kari Kummeneje, NLB, (NO)

14:00-14:15 A case example of a multilingual library's work. Entresse library represents and considers an exceptional variety of mother languages among their staff, users, collections and programming. The library received the Finland award (Suomi-palkinto) in 2015 for their diversity work. Reti-Liis Saks (FI) presents their work.

14:15-14:30 Sivuvälo project has created possibilities and networks for writers who write in other than the national languages in Finland and other Nordic countries. Poet, designer and producer Daniel Malpica presents two of the work formats of this multilingual poetry platform; the multimedia poetry evenings and the Sivuvälo publication series.

14:30-15:00 BREAK (Coffee)

15:00-16:00 Concluding discussion. Moderator: Outi Korhonen (FI), Culture for All

Please note that on Sept 20th, the programme of the language festival includes a multimedia poetry evening "Mutant language" organized by Nolith X and Sivuvälo on Wednesday night at 7-9pm. Check also the [whole programme of the Nordic Language festival](#).



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