


# THE DEMOCRACY HANDBOOK

*From engagement  
to influence*

**mucf**  
Myndigheten för ungdoms-  
och civillsamhällesfrågor





In December 2020, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) assumed the rights to The Democracy Handbook from the General Inheritance Fund. The Democracy Handbook has since been revised and updated by MUCF.

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demokratiska principerna, verkarna för demokrati  
demokrati, ett politiskt parti  
demokratisera, medbestäm-  
demokrati och jämli-  
dem



# THE BIG WORD: DEMOCRACY

The word democracy is a compound of Greek *demos*, meaning the people, and *kratos*, meaning power. I.e., people power. Democracy is something we create together. In a democracy, everyone has a say, and people are allowed to grow and create. People respect each other.

In Sweden and other democratic countries we exercise our democratic power every day.



Democracy is a stable form of government, but at the same time vulnerable. World history holds many examples where those in power restrict people's rights and freedoms in order to create undemocratic societies. By studying history, we can learn to recognize when democracy is threatened. One warning sign is when those in power criticise the established media and institutions, seeking to impose their views on the people and turning against newspapers, television, radio and courts. Another warning sign is when minorities in society are threatened or rights are taken away, or when those in power ignore decisions made jointly.

Vaccinating society against undemocratic forces is not possible. But we can train ourselves in the methods and tools of democracy. One good way is to get involved in an association. Whether you want to change the world, or find a way to come together around a shared interest, this handbook can help you do so. It gives the opportunity to pursue your passions together with others. At the same time, you learn to work democratically. That is something big.

# Democracy because:

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## **IT'S FAIR**

One person = one vote

## **THE MAJORITY DECIDES**

A society includes many different opinions, and not everyone can get their way at the same time. In a democracy, the majority decides.

## **MINORITIES ARE RESPECTED**

The majority deciding is fair. At the same time, it must be ensured that minorities in society are not oppressed. To prevent that, there are human rights.

## **YOU CAN BE DIFFERENT**

In a democracy, everyone is free to do as they please, under the prevailing laws. It is important to practice getting along despite differences.

## **IT PUSHES SOCIETY FORWARD**

To get along in a democracy, you need to talk with each other. These conversations bring out people's thoughts, criticisms and opinions, which lead to the development and improvement of society.





**Sweden's youth policy objectives:**

*All young people are to have good living conditions, the power to shape their lives and influence over developments in society.*

**Think about it!**

Do we live up to that goal here in Sweden?

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What can we do differently?

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# SPARKING ENGAGEMENT

A democracy is based on citizens' engagement, interest and opportunity to participate. In Sweden, everyone has the right to organise themselves, form associations, express their opinions and demonstrate. That's what living in a democracy means.

That young people are involved, join in and learn how a democracy works is crucial for the survival of democracy.

What are you and your friends passionate about? Something big, or something small? Whether it's about changing the world, your town, your village, your school or your free time, your engagement is important!



**77 percent** of young people in Sweden think that it is important to stand up for your views.

Source: Young people with attitudes, 2019 part 1 [mucf.se/attityd-och-varderingsstudie](http://mucf.se/attityd-och-varderingsstudie)

## Think about it!

In what ways can you and other young people demonstrate and stand up for your opinions?

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# Young people's right to participation

On 1 January 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child became Swedish law. It applies to all persons up to the age of 18.

The human rights of children and young people include:

- everyone is equally worthy
- adults should think about what is good for you
- you shall be able to live, grow and feel well
- you can say what you think - adults must listen to you

*You can read more about your rights at the website of the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden: [bo.se](http://bo.se).*



*Youth participation, knowledge and engagement in the principles of democracy is, in the long run, crucial for the survival of democracy.*

Fokus 19, [mucf.se/fokus19](http://mucf.se/fokus19)

## Think about it!

How can we - young people and adults - together and separately contribute to the survival of democracy?

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# Rights at different ages



## Age 16

You may take a risk-free job



## Age 16

You can start a company



## Age 16

You can control the money you earn

## Age 0 to 18

You are covered by Convention on the Rights of the Child



## Age 18

You attain so-called "legal capacity" and can start an account for an association



## Age 18 år

You may vote



## Age 18 år

You attain majority



## 17-19 år

You receive a student grant if you are studying



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IF THE ASSOCIATION CEASES

An example  
of when  
engagement  
is sparked

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# Fridays For Future: *One person's engagement can start something big*

Sometimes the desire to make a difference can be so strong that you must do something. That's what happened to Greta Thunberg, who in August 2018 sat outside of Parliament in Stockholm with a poster reading "School strike for the climate".

She was demonstrating for more serious climate-change and environmental policy among Swedish politicians prior to the 2018 elections.

Several young people thought that Greta's fight was important, and followed her lead, forming Fridays For Future. Today, it is made up of students in numerous countries who together, through school strikes, fight to make people – but especially those with most power – listen to scientists' statements about climate change, and take the issue seriously.

Read more about Fridays For Future at [fridaysforfuture.org](https://fridaysforfuture.org)

What are you passionate about? Do what Greta did and take action: it could start something big for you, your friends or your town.

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*We showed that we are  
united and that we, young  
people, are unstoppable.*

*Greta Thunberg, UN Youth Climate Summit,  
New York City, 21 September 2019*

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# A MOVEMENT TAKES SHAPE

Anyone living in Sweden can start an association. It can basically be about anything. What a great opportunity! Do you and your friends have a subject or issue you are passionate about? Maybe you should start an association together.

There are several laws and regulations that must be followed. These help ensure that the finances of the association work, and that others can join in.





**Four out of ten young people are members of one or more associations.**

*Source: Young people with attitudes, 2019 part 3 mucf.se/attityd-och-varderingsstudie*

## Think about it!

What associations exist where you live?

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### SUGGESTION FROM MUCF!

Seek help from those who are experts at running associations, and remember what is important when starting and running an organisation: civil society of course! Ask if your school can invite representatives from different organisations to tell you more!

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# Start by choosing an organisational form

## **CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORM OF ASSOCIATION**

Maybe you can do what you want without starting a new association. For example, you can run a project, start a network or join an existing association. Before getting started, discuss the pros and cons together.

## **START AN ASSOCIATION**

If you start an association, the activity becomes a separate legal entity. Then you can seek funding, make purchases and much more in the name of the association. But it also means that you must comply with certain laws, such as those concerning financial accounting and meeting practices.

## **JOIN AN EXISTING ASSOCIATION**

There are more than 250,000 organisations in Sweden. An association can be, for example, a sports club, a political party or foundation.

## **RUN A PROJECT**

Some issues may be best addressed in project form. A project usually lasts for a limited period of time and has a specific goal. Often an association must back the project to be able to get funding.

## **START A NETWORK**

A network can be a good platform for many activities. It also requires less administration than an association, which can be an advantage.

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An example  
of when a  
movement  
takes shape

# Alfta Gaming Association

Alfta Gaming Association in Ovanåker was founded in 2019 by a group of children, young people and adults who saw that there was a lack of community around gaming culture in the area. The founders saw that young people often had LAN parties at one another's homes as a way of socializing. Then came the idea to gather others with the same interest so that more people could join the group. With the help of the Gaming Federation Sverok, it was easy to start an association. Read more about Sverok at [sverok.se](http://sverok.se) and Alfta Gaming Association on [facebook/AlftaSpelforening](https://www.facebook.com/AlftaSpelforening).

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The movement has taken shape quickly, and already in the first year the association had over 60 members and held activities for over 1,300 people. "We are a core of young people and adults with a shared goal, and that's what makes us so successful," says Maria Moreno Bolin, president and founder.

Today Alfta Gaming Association offers everything from video games, e-sports and LAN to paintball and participation in the Pokémon GO Community Day, where the activities are decided by the young people themselves.

The Alfta Gaming Association serves a purpose for individuals as well as society by giving gamers a context of their own and an alternative to the sports-dominated associations in Ovanåker. "We provide community through gaming culture," says Maria.

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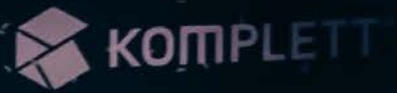
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DREAMHACK  
SUMMER 2018

PRESENTED BY



“We provide  
community through  
gaming culture”

*Maria Moreno Bolin, founder*



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# ORGANISE!

There are some things to consider when starting an association or a project. It is important to work together and to take advantage of existing interest and engagement but also to be clear about responsibilities.

Amidst what can resemble a jungle of laws and requirements, it is important to remind yourself and others about why you have come together: your shared interest in an important issue!



# Start an association

## WRITE BY-LAWS

The by-laws state what the association is and shall do. It is a regulatory framework that defines your association, what applies and who decides what. The by-laws are adopted when the association is formed, at your first annual meeting. By-laws can only be amended at a new annual meeting. The Swedish Tax Agency has guidelines for what the association's statutes should contain. Read more at: [skatteverket.se](http://skatteverket.se)

## PLAN YOUR ACTIVITIES

What do you want to do in your association during a fiscal year? What do you want to achieve? What can you afford? At the annual meeting, you can make a joint decision on a simple plan. This allows everyone to have a say in how resources are allocated, and thus decisions are not only made by the board. When everyone is engaged and knows what's going to happen, it also increases the sense of community and security.

## APPOINT THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE AND PROPOSE THE BOARD

A nomination committee is a group whose task is to propose candidates for the association's board, i.e., the individuals who will be in charge of the association after the next election. Also make a proposal for the members of the first board. Both the nomination committee and the board are elected at the annual meeting.

## HOLD YOUR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

Launch your activities by holding an annual meeting. At the annual meeting, you decide on by-laws and a plan of activities, and choose the board and the nomination committee. You should also choose auditors at the annual meeting. That is, those who, for the next annual meeting, will audit the activities, and examine whether the finances are being properly managed.

## CHOOSE A BOARD

The board is responsible for the association between annual meetings. The board manages the overall planning. But everyone in the association can participate in implementing what the board decides. Depending on how many of you there are, the same people sitting in the board may also run the activity. It is the responsibility of the board to plan the next annual meeting.



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## APPOINT A FINANCIAL OFFICER

An association must keep track of its finances and keep records of its income and expenditures. For this to work, someone needs to manage finances. Since the association is a separate legal entity, it has its own revenues and costs. If the association operates at a loss, this does not affect the members or the financial manager. There is usually also an auditor, whose duties include auditing the finances.

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## HAVE A FIRST BOARD MEETING

The first board meeting also marks the beginning of the fiscal year. Now the newly elected board is formed. This means deciding what responsibilities the elected representatives shall have for the year. Minutes of the first board meeting and of annual meetings must be signed and saved. These documents are needed when you apply for an organisation number or a bank account, or seek project funds.

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## CREATE A MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

Create a membership register with contact details for all members. You must be able to contact all members before each annual meeting. Everyone shall have the same opportunity to participate and influence the future of the association. It is also good to be able to communicate with all members, e.g., through newsletters.

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## PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING: COMPLY WITH GDPR

Any association that processes members' personal data, for example in a register, must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection provides guidance on how to process personal data in small associations and member organisations. Read more at [IMY.se](https://imy.se)

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## REGISTER THE ASSOCIATION

Register your association with the Swedish Tax Agency to get an organisation number. You can say that this is the association's personal ID number, and it is needed in contacts with public authorities and others. Registration is not mandatory, but can be useful.

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## OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

Once you have an organisation number, you can open a bank account. Persons under 18 years of age may not open a bank account for an association. Get help from an adult.



# Build an association

## FORMULATE YOUR VALUES

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Values define what you stand for and what is important to you. These values are a less formal complement to the by-laws. Think of them as guidelines for how you will act in everyday life. Try to formulate your values as concretely as possible.

## HOLD ANNUAL MEETINGS

At the annual meeting, you will evaluate the past year and consider what you will do in the coming year. You also elect people to the board who will be responsible for the association until the next annual meeting.

## TAKE MINUTES

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Always take minutes during your meetings, as it helps you to remember what has been decided. In addition, everyone can see the decisions afterwards, even those absent from the meeting.

## GET STARTED!

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As a newly formed association, you have a lot to do: find premises, buy materials and create routines for food, activities and more. Take courses and have meetings. Learn how other associations work for inspiration.

## INSPIRED

Make sure to meet and do something other than just hold meetings. Your association is an opportunity to invent all sorts of things together. Do things that feel inspiring, maybe invite someone you are curious about.





# Create engagement

## **ACT!**

Get involved in an issue you are passionate about. Something important and fun. If it seems boring, try something else.

## **LAUGH**

A positive atmosphere inspires and attracts more people to participate.



## **BE KIND**

Remember that everyone has different circumstances, experiences and needs. So be humble and show understanding

## **HELP OUT**

In an association, everything is new. This includes both situations and people. It can sometimes feel difficult. That's why it's important to help each other. If something feels too difficult, then try to get help from an outsider.



## **RELY ON EACH OTHER**

Have confidence in each other. Everyone has the right to express themselves and be treated with respect. You can allocate responsibilities based on members' knowledge and experience, or out of curiosity and the desire to learn something new!

## **TALK**

Much of what we call engagement happens invisibly. It involves communication with members, funders or politicians. Or planning for things to be done. But everything takes time. Make sure to talk about everything you do. Then you can distribute the tasks.



## **CARE FOR THE DRIVING SPIRITS**

Sometimes, one or two people can provide the impetus for an entire group. This can work for a while, but not in the long run. Even those who are really passionate about something end up losing steam. That's why it's important to both support the driving spirits, and spread the engagement around.

## **DARE TO SAY NO**

Don't take on too much. You can only do so much. If it gets to be too much work, it's no longer fun. So try to distribute tasks.



## **CELEBRATE!**

Set milestones. When you reach them, be sure to celebrate! Buy a cake and cheer each other on!

# Creating participation

## **SAY HELLO!**

Remember to say hello to everyone, not only those you already know. This creates a positive atmosphere in the group.



## **SPEAK SO THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS**

When you say something, don't assume that everyone understands. Maybe you need to be clearer, or speak in a different way. Ask listeners to speak up if they don't understand.

## **SMART FURNISHING**

The placement of chairs and tables affects the sense of participation and community. Arrange the furniture so that everyone can see each other.

## **KEEP IT SIMPLE**

In an association, some formalities and rules must be followed. But choose the simplest working methods that suit you.

## **LISTEN!**

In order to make decisions together as a group, you need each other's knowledge and opinions. People who usually talk a lot must practice listening. Those who are often silent must practice making their voices heard.



## **SPEAK IN TURNS**

To make everyone feel involved, it is a good idea to let everyone in the group speak in turn, without interruption. This way, everyone can speak, and all good ideas are heard.

## **DISCUSS IN PAIRS**

It can help to occasionally interrupt a big meeting and sit down to speak in pairs. Then each pair can tell the group what they have said. In this way, everyone can have their say. No one risks being silent, or for that matter talking throughout the meeting.



## **ROTATE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Successful groups often have just the right mix of people with different perspectives. People who know how things work are combined with others who are new and can bring innovative ideas. Sometimes just swapping roles can give rise to new perspectives and ideas.

## **EVERYONE'S VOICE IS IMPORTANT**

Let everyone participate and decide, regardless of ability or age. Children and young people can decide on some parts of the activity, adults on others, and some decisions are best taken together. People with severe disabilities can make their voices heard with the support of friends or an assistant. With the right support, everyone can have a voice.





*In different parts of Sweden, young people experience different conditions to participate in society.*

Source: Fokus 18 [mucf.se/fokus18](http://mucf.se/fokus18)

## Think about it!

Why do you think this happens?

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What is it like where you live?

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# Make everyone feel included

## **FORMULATE RULES**

Discuss the rules that apply in your association. Formulate answers to questions such as: How should we act towards each other? How do we make everyone feel included and respected?

## **DISTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITY**

Distribute responsibility in the group so that one person does not do and decide everything. It makes the association stronger when many are involved. Taking responsibility helps people grow.

## **APPRECIATE DIFFERENCES**

Remember that we are all different. This is cool and essential, not complicated or difficult.

## **SHARE UNEQUALLY**

Sharing equally is not always the best solution. Some may need more support than others. Then try to give it to them. Everyone benefits.

## **RESPECT OTHERS**

In a group, it's easy for everyone to start thinking and feeling similarly. And you might consider those outside the group to be weird. Try to discourage such tendencies and respect others' opinions.



# Create accessible meetings

Between 10 and 20 percent of a population has some form of disability. According to the Discrimination Act, the person responsible for an activity must ensure that the activity is accessible to a person with a disability. It is therefore not an option to deprioritise accessibility. And why should we? What is necessary for someone is good for everyone!

## CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Try to create an environment where everyone feels welcome by considering as many different perspectives as possible when planning a meeting. For example, is there an audio induction system and lifts? Do you need a wheelchair ramp at the entrance? Are the toilets accessible for everyone? Are there chairs for everyone, and the possibility to stand for those who wish? This helps more people to feel welcome. It also saves time, energy and money.

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### CHECKLISTA

Audio induction system

Lifts

Wheelchair ramp

Accessible toilets

Space for everyone

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## CLEAR INFORMATION

Before the meeting, state what the meeting is about. Be clear regarding what is expected and what participants must bring or prepare for the meeting. It is important that everyone can participate according to their abilities, so also provide information about accessibility in the invitation. That way, individuals don't have to ask questions. You can also encourage participants to get in touch if they have other accessibility needs. Also check if there are any allergies among the participants if you are serving food or refreshments.

## PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

Making a presentation? You should assume that people with different abilities and needs will be present. One suggestion is not to have too much text. And try to always read or describe what is shown in images.

## MAKE EVERYONE VISIBLE

Use language and images that reflect the diversity of the community, for example in invitations and presentations. However, it is important not to get stuck in boring stereotypes. Get help from others: it is always better when more people help each other to think!

## DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Even if a meeting is digital, consider accessibility needs and create an accessible environment.

## BREAKS

It's easy to forget to take a break. But this is important. Try to find a rhythm that suits your group. Better too many breaks, than too few. This keeps everyone alert and ready to contribute to the work.



# Digital etiquette

## **BOTH DIGITALLY AND PHYSICALLY**

How do you meet? In real life, or are there meetings that work just as well digitally? Difficult issues and conflict resolution are best handled in person. However, simpler issues can be resolved in digital meetings. Digital meetings can facilitate more people to join, when members are in different locations.

## **DIGITAL MEETINGS**

Test the technology you intend to use before the meeting. Send out an agenda describing the subject of the meeting, any decisions to be made, the date and time and a link to the meeting. Remember that digital meetings must be accessible to all participants (see suggestion on p. 35).

Ask all participants turn on their cameras so you can see each other. The person holding the meeting distributes the floor and asks for feedback. Appoint someone to monitor the chat and whether someone raises a hand. Also appoint someone to take minutes.

## **THINK ABOUT HOW YOU WRITE**

It is always wise to express yourself clearly and simply, e.g., in e-mails and social media. This is particularly important when communicating with several people in your association. Try writing to avoid misunderstandings. Suggestions: Let someone else read text you have written before you send it.

## **BE EXTRA KIND**

In e-mails and social media, it's easy to be perceived as unnecessarily harsh. So be extra kind in all digital communication. If a conflict arises, try to resolve it in a meeting instead. Being accommodating always pays off.

## **ONLINE HATE**

Responding to online hate on social media can be difficult, especially alone. It is better when several people together confront and nuance the hatred. Make a plan for what to do if your association or one of your members is targeted.



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## Four principles for source criticism:

**Authenticity:** Check if the source is reliable.

**Time context:** Find out when the source was created. A contemporary source is generally more credible than a source created long after an event. For example, memories change as time passes.

**Independence:** Check if the source is dependent on other sources, for example, if it has been influenced by rumours.

**Impartiality:** Check whether the source is biased due to personal, financial or political interests.

*Source: Thurén T. Källkritik (2013)*

## Think about it!

When can questioning a source be useful?

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Have you ever done so?

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## SUGGESTION FROM MUCF!

The Swedish Media Council has developed a digital training material in media and information literacy, called "MIK för mig". The training material is intended for schools, school libraries and public libraries. The purpose of the material is to educate students as well as adults working with young people. Read more at [statensmediarad.se](http://statensmediarad.se).

# Break through the noise

## YOUR MESSAGE

To reach out, you need to have a clear message. This formulation should sum up what the association seeks to achieve. Try to develop your message by answering questions such as: what does the association contribute to society? What problem can you solve? How can you solve it, and what is the association's role? Use your message in as many contexts as possible

## STORYTELLING

Everyone likes a good story. So try highlighting your history in your association's communications. It improves understanding of your activities.

## IMAGES

Images are an effective means of communication. If you use photos of people, ask them for permission before you publish or post them on social media (see p. 27 for more information on GDPR).

## NEWSLETTER

All members must be able to follow what is going on in the association. By periodically sending out a newsletter, you keep everyone informed. Try to keep the information concise and clear. And remember to update the contact list!

## YOUR WEB PRESENCE

Where on the web are your members and your target audiences? Based on that, choose whether you should have a website, an account on Instagram, Facebook or perhaps some other social media site.



Instagram



Facebook



Snapchat



TikTok



Youtube



Twitter



## OUR MESSAGE:


# Communicate so that everyone understands

## WRITE SO THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS

Always strive for simple and clear language. Write short sentences, so that the text is easy to understand. Be concrete, clear and consistent.

### CHECK

By helping each other with the texts, you will improve their quality. Read each other's texts. Can you understand what is meant? Is the message clear? Or does it need to be reworded?

## MAKES WEBSITES EASY TO UNDERSTAND

Keep in mind that people with different abilities seek information on your website. Therefore text should be able to be enlarged, the layout should be airy and the screen reader should be able to interpret information correctly. Then more people can access your content. By alternating the use of text, images and video, you make the information accessible to more people. Films should also include subtitles and audio description.

## TRANSLATE

By communicating in languages other than Swedish, you may reach more people interested in your issues. Depending on your objectives, it may therefore be wise to make some information available in languages other than Swedish.

## CONSIDER IMAGES

Consider who appears in images. How they stand, sit or from what angle they are photographed has an impact on what the image communicates. It's also good if images can reflect what society looks like, and that all groups of people are represented.

## An example of how an activity organizes itself

# Gränby 4H-klubb

Gränby 4H Club is a 4H club in Sweden. It is operated by its board of young people between 16 and 18 years of age, together with the club's members.

The club is located at Gränby 4H Farm in Uppsala, which means that a large part of activities focus on animals. The core activity consists of a group of people who alternate caring for and riding the horses at the 4H farm and who attend major horse-related events, like the Stockholm Horse Show. More recently, a division has also been formed by the younger members, between 13 and 14 years old, who care for and play with the goats. The young people have taught the goats everything from jumping to pulling a 'goat-drawn' carriage.

The club also offers courses, children's parties and pony rides at the 4H farm, which is also its main source of income. If a member helps out, they can collect points which they can then use instead of money to participate in various activities for members. "We want everyone to be able to participate, and the activities we are otherwise quite expensive," explains Ellen Glöde, president of the club.

Ellen describes that although membership is constantly renewed, many remain in the club for a long time. "Many people get involved from the start because of the horses," she says, "but they stay because they find friends and it becomes a very strong community. Many have their best friends in the club. They feel they have an important role, and taking responsibility is a significant part!"

Read more about 4H farms at [4h.se](http://4h.se)

*"Many have their best friends in the club"*

*Ellen Glöde, President*

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# MAKE AN IMPACT!

An association unites people with a common interest or issue they are passionate about. This could involve anything from culture and sport to environmental concerns or protecting the interests of animals. In an association, your and your friends' engagement becomes a way of to influence a social issue, a problem you want to solve or a way to contribute something you think is needed.

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**Four of 10** young people in Sweden say they want to have a say in matters affecting their municipality. Just under **2 of 10** feel that they have influence.

Source: Fokus 18 [mucf.se/fokus18](http://mucf.se/fokus18)

## Think about it!

What needs to be done so that more people want to have an impact?

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What issues would you like to be involved in?

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# Influencing society

## THINK BIG

If you are working for change, ask yourself why the change is important. The answer may be: "it's good for us". Try to think bigger. Try to answer why the change is good for society.



## BE CONSTRUCTIVE

If you are upset about problems in society, try to find solutions. It is easy to get caught up in criticism of those in power and the authorities.

## DEBATE

Discuss how much you, as an association, are willing to enter the fray. Do you seek to join a debate that is already going on? Or will you create a debate yourselves? If so, are you prepared to accept criticism?

## CREATE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Learn where your target audience is, and how best to reach them. Also, consider who has influence over your target group. Where are they?



## PROTEST

Protest or stage a demonstration. Try to create a positive atmosphere. Document with pictures that you can share, e.g., on social media.

## ATTEND A CONFERENCE

Conferences and fairs are good opportunities to make new contacts, e.g., with politicians, potential donors and other associations. These are fora where you can explain why your particular activity is important to support

## WRITE OPINION PIECES

An opinion piece in a newspaper can be a good way to get your message across.



## CALL A POLITICIAN

Do not hesitate to contact politicians to share your views and suggestions. It's usually easier than you think to get an appointment. Politicians need information from people and organisations across society.

## ASK BASIC QUESTIONS

Sometimes you need to step back and ask the questions: Why do we exist? And why is this so important? The answers are often a good basis for influencing society.

## BE PROUD

Think carefully about what you are doing and why it is important. Write it on a piece of paper and hang the paper somewhere visible. Be proud!





An example  
of when  
engagement  
is sparked

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# Myths and Realities: A Lesbian Odyssey

The project "Myths and Realities: A Lesbian Odyssey" is run by the non-profit association Lesbian Power. The project, funded by Swedish Inheritance Fund, Postkodlotteriet's culture foundation and Region Västerbotten, aims to "Strengthen Norrland lesbian and queer youth's rights, empowerment, identity and psychosocial health, increasing participation in cultural life as well as promoting democracy". Read more about the project on [odysse.lesbianmakt.nu](http://odysse.lesbianmakt.nu) and about the association on [facebook/LesbiskMakt](https://facebook.com/LesbiskMakt)

The focus on the Norrland region is due to the fact that most LGBTQI+ initiatives for young people are found in southern Sweden, or in the big coastal cities. This reinforces the idea that you, as a queer in Norrland, must move in order to live an acceptable life.

Queer youth growing up in rural areas often feel they are the first LGBTQI+ people there. But there have always been queers. By highlighting historical queer people around Norrland, a bigger historical picture is shown, and more people are included.

In order to draw attention to lesbian and queer past and present they run a mentoring programme where young LGBTQI+ people create works about "Lesbian history and contemporary life in Norrland through the ages" together with a lesbian, professional artist. The works are presented in a touring art exhibition. In addition, there is a lesbian museum on wheels that collects and displays materials. The museum also serves as a meeting place where queerness is the norm.

"The project has given me new ideas about my identity and made me dare to start using a combination of pronouns. My self-esteem has improved! Now I know that I'm part of a queer community in the north!" comments a participant.

*"Now I know that I am part of a queer community in the north!"*

*Member of the association*

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# KEEP GROWING!?

Once the work is underway, it is time to reflect on the framework of the activity. That is to say, what objectives and guidelines are needed and how the work must be documented and monitored. It is important to cooperate and distribute work within the group. Do you want to grow, attract more members and interact with others outside your own organisation? Perhaps you are satisfied with the activity as it is?

However, you can shape your activity, and whether you want to grow or not, always remember to have fun along the way!



# Succeeding with a development project

## FORMULATE GOALS

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Agree on some simple questions that you can answer. Sample questions: What are you going to do? What do you want achieve? How will you do it? The answers give an overview of what the project will be about.

## PLAN TOGETHER

By planning together, you lay the foundations for good cohesion. Test different ways to work together: brainstorming, sketching and drawing. And, perhaps most importantly, listening to each other. When someone else comes up with an idea, try to be encouraging and curious.

## THINK FORWARD

How do you develop your idea into something long-term? How can the activity continue after the project is over? Plan for this at the beginning of the project, and keep it in mind along the way.

## MAKE A BUDGET

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What will it cost to carry out what you have planned? Can you afford it? Or do you need a new plan? Distribute your costs over different things and different times of the year.

## DISTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITIES

Discuss how to distribute work in a fair way. Work in pairs and help each other push things forward. But make sure you have a clear division of responsibilities. Everyone must know who does what.

## MEET POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Tell others about your idea. Describe what you seek to do. And ask potential partners if they want to help. When seeking partnerships with, e.g., municipalities or large organisations it is important to get them involved from the start.

## EVALUATE

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It is important to evaluate the work. Both along the way and at the end of the project. Reflect together. How many participated? What has worked well? What went wrong? Do you need to change anything? Talk to others who have completed successful projects: they may be able to share ideas and suggestions!

## BE PREPARED TO REVISE

Sometimes you must change your plan and rethink. Some things may go more quickly than expected. Other things may take more time than you thought. Then it's time to revise.

## REPORT

If you have received funding to carry out a project, you need to be able to report to the funder about the project. Use words, pictures and numbers. Make use of evaluations and other work you've done along the way. Describe went well and what was difficult.

## GET STARTED!

To ensure that ideas and thoughts are not just hot air, it's important that you get started. How you begin is not so important. The important thing is that you get started.



# Find new ideas

## REVIEW ROUTINES

Sometimes it's good to review your routines and ways of working. Think about how you work. Do you need to have meetings every week at the same time? Or is there a better way? Organise your work so that it feels fun and fits your everyday life.

## DO SOMETHING UNEXPECTED

It's easy to get stuck in old ruts. So it can make sense sometimes to do the opposite. Try new methods, collaborate with someone new or do things in reverse order. Get out of your safety zone.

## EXAMINE NORMS

What is taken for granted in your association? Are there any unspoken expectations or norms? Discovering them will help create a more inclusive and creative culture.

# Create good partnerships

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## CONDUCT AN EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Do research: Are there others doing what you do or seek to do? Can you learn or draw inspiration from what others have done? Try collaborating.

## DARE TO ASK

It is often a good idea to work together or to get help from another association. The more you are, the greater your likelihood to succeed. So dare to ask collaborators! Maybe the others don't even know you exist, or how good working together can be.

## GROW WITH OTHERS

Like people, different associations have different skills, even if they have similar activities. That's why it's good to meet other associations. See if you can benefit from each other's strengths.

## WORKING EQUAL

When collaborating: Be careful not to let one party take over. A successful collaboration is based on consensus. Harness the power of your differences.

## DARE TO DISCONTINUE

If you find that a collaboration is not moving forward, it may be better to discontinue it.

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# Increase your numbers

## CARE FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Take care of your members. Create a culture where participants feel valued, happy and have a chance to develop. Positive energy attracts new members.

## KEEP IT STRAIGHT

Do you know who is involved in your association? How do you reach new people? Who's quitting? Are most members too similar? Perhaps certain norms and structures need to be challenged so more people to dare to join.

## RECRUIT

There are no rules regarding how many members an association may have. But the more you are, the more fun the work often becomes. With more members, energy increases. It is also easier to form a "strong voice" and to receive grants. Plan how to recruit new members.

## EXPLAIN WHAT MEMBERSHIP MEANS

Remember that those you meet do not know everything about your association. Be clear when communicating with potential members. Explain what it means to be a member. Say, for example: "As a member, you are supporting the association. You can vote at the annual meeting and take part in activities."

## ASK THREE QUESTIONS

Anyone who wants to volunteer should answer three questions. Use them in meetings with potential new members:

What do I want to do? \_\_\_\_\_

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What can I do, and how? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do I want in return? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Sustainable finances

## **APPOINT A FINANCIAL OFFICER**

For your project to succeed, your finances must be under control. It may seem difficult before you get started, but you can learn. Try to help each other. You need to appoint a person to keep the books and keep track of expenses and costs.

## **MAKE A CALENDAR YEAR**

Draw a year together on a large piece of paper. What will happen each month? What will it cost? When do you need to submit applications? When do you receive money? When is the annual meeting? And when do you invoice your members? By writing everything down in calendar order, you'll get a good overview.

## **HOLD ON TO YOUR MONEY**

Think about what you need to spend money on. Perhaps you would like to eat in conjunction with your meetings. If you're travelling, try to book tickets well in advance. It is usually cheaper. Consider before purchasing something. Maybe you can borrow what you need, instead of buying it.

## **CAREFUL BOOKKEEPING**

All associations are legal entities in their own right. This means that you need to keep records and keep all the papers in order. Among other things, this involves saving receipts, and recording all expenditure and income using accounting software. Free accounting software is available for download.

## **TAKE OUT INSURANCE**

As a private individual, you and your possessions are covered by your home insurance. At work, you are covered by occupational health and safety insurance. But what about when you volunteer? You need to know. Take out insurance in case something is stolen or someone is injured.

## **CONSIDER FINANCIAL DIFFERENCES**

People's personal finances are different. Keep this in mind when organizing financial issues in the project, for example when writing registration forms. For example, you can have checkboxes with options such as "I can't afford it" or "I can pay for two people". Perhaps costs make some people reluctant to participate. Consider how you will reach them.

## **LONG-TERM PLANNING**

What happens when the money runs out? How will the activity continue after the project ends? Consider potential funders even before you start your project.

## OUR FISCAL YEAR:

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

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### SUGGESTION FROM MUCF!

It's not easy to keep track of this insurance stuff. What really applies to non-profit associations and those involved? You can find suggestions and advice at [www.konsumenternas.se](http://www.konsumenternas.se).

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# Funding your activities

## MOTIVATE

If you need money from outside funders, explain why they should support you. What do you do so well? How do you make a difference? And what do you need money for? Explain and tell, preferably with examples and stories.

## CHARGE FEES

Dare to charge for activities. There's nothing wrong with doing it. What is important is to make clear what something costs and where the money goes. Examples of fees: membership fee (per semester), participation fee (for an activity or camp) and competition fee (to compete in a tournament).

## START A STUDY CIRCLE

One way to fund your activities is to organise a study circle. By reporting your meetings to a study association, you can receive grants in the form of money and books. Try contacting a study association, such as the Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF), Nykterhetsrörelsens bildningsverksamhet, Bilda or Kulturens Bildningsförbund.

## SELL STUFF

Organise a flea market or sell things you no longer need. You can also make a Facebook event or sign up in the municipality's local calendars. If you don't have a good venue for the flea market, try borrowing, e.g., a school.

## FUNDRAISE

Many associations finance part of their activities through fundraising. Briefly describe what you do, where the money goes and how to contribute. You can choose to do a traditional fundraising campaign or use crowdfunding. Fundraising can take place on an ongoing basis or in the form of time-limited campaigns.





# Routes to funding

## FOUNDATIONS AND FUNDS

Many different private funds and foundations accept applications. Some are established through inheritance from various people. At [globalgrant.com/search](http://globalgrant.com/search) and in their "Big Funds Book", [globalgrant.com/big-book-of-funds-grants](http://globalgrant.com/big-book-of-funds-grants), you will find many good suggestions. There may also be funds available for smaller projects in your municipality, money which can help you get started.

## MUNICIPALITY AND REGION

Do you want to organise an activity, a course, a rabbit-jumping competition or a LAN? Many municipalities have funding available. These funds may have cute names like 'Fast Cash/Snabba slanten' or 'Youth Idea Allowance/Idépengar för unga'. All children and young people can apply for these grants, and you do not need to be a member of an association. The aim is to encourage initiatives launched and driven by youth. Try contacting your municipality, and see what opportunities are available there. Seek out people in your municipality or region who are interested in your issues and ideas. In addition to money for activities, you can often apply for money for premises costs or to develop your association.

## BIG DONORS

Several public actors and authorities allocate money to associations and projects, both ongoing government funding and specific project grants. For example, the Swedish Inheritance Fund, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Prison and Probation Service, the Public Health Agency, the Consumer Agency and the National Council for Crime Prevention. There are also large private actors that distribute funds, one example being Postkodlotteriet.

## GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Government grants are distributed annually by, e.g., MUCF and the National Board of Health and Welfare. Some government grants can be awarded to organisations based on the type of activities they carry out and the number of members. Some government grants can be applied for regarding projects that an organisation wishes to carry out. Learn what conditions, rules and exceptions apply. Perhaps you can apply?



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MAKE AN IMPACT

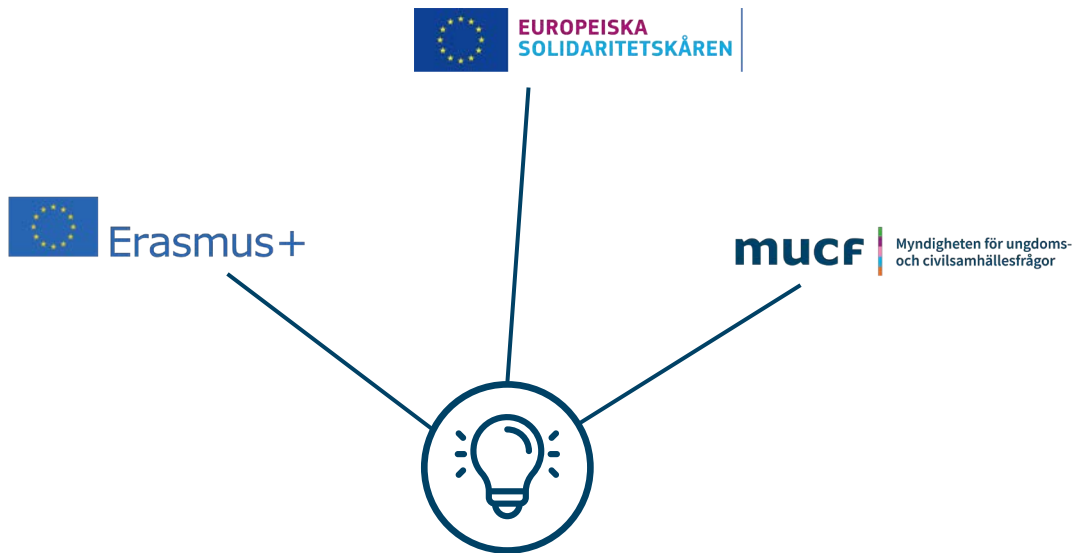
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## INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Participating in international collaborations can be educational, fun and exciting. The downside is that applying for an international project can be complicated – but try anyway!

MUCF is the Swedish programme office for both Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. Erasmus+ supports international cooperation and development for EU youth. Here you can carry out youth exchanges, run projects, develop staff skills in youth issues and create strategic partnerships.

Read about Erasmus+ at [mucf.se/erasmus-plus](https://mucf.se/erasmus-plus).

The European Solidarity Corps aims to enable more young people to participate and get involved in society. Here you can host volunteers, send young people abroad to volunteer and help young people run their own community projects. Read more here: [mucf.se/europeansolidaritycrowd](https://mucf.se/europeansolidaritycrowd).

The Nordic Council also has various calls. Current calls can be found at: [norden.org/en/sok-stod](https://norden.org/en/sok-stod)

## SPONSORSHIP

You can also try approaching the business community. Many companies are keen to support associations through sponsorship, especially local ones.

# Apply for project funding from MUCF

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [mucf.se/grants](http://mucf.se/grants) you will find all the information you need on how to apply for funding for a project.



## REVIEW THE INSTRUCTIONS

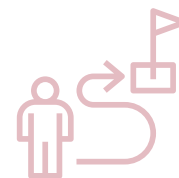
What applies to your project? Do you need partners? If so, you must develop a project idea together. A grant exists because society wants to achieve something special by funding projects. Is what you seek to do consistent with the purpose of the grant?

## CALL AND ASK

If you are unsure about the application process, please contact us at MUCF. We can often provide general suggestions and information.

## FORMULATE A CLEAR PURPOSE

Start by discussing what it is you seek to do. What is most important to you? What can your project contribute to achieving the objectives of the grant?



## REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

All donors, including MUCF, have clear requirements that must be met in order to receive funding. The basic requirements are the same for all our grants, but each type of project grant has its own specific requirements linked to the objectives and purpose of the grant.

## PREPARE AN APPLICATION AND A BUDGET

Now it's time to start writing. Do this in peace and quiet, and take the time to talk and bounce ideas off each other. Anchor the idea in the organisation. When the time comes, make your application in MUCF's digital application system, available at [mucf.se](http://mucf.se). Make a budget in which your calculations are as realistic as possible regarding what different things will cost.



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An example  
of how an  
activity  
continues to  
grow

## Pod Theatre 16

In Ljungby, the project Pod Theatre 16 was created to enable young people between 16 and 25 to reach out more widely with their theatre. The project is a development of the activities offered by Theatre 16 in its cultural centre Lokal 16. Since being launched in 2013, by a young person and a parent, the activities of Theatre 16 have grown and developed steadily with the help of partners and sponsorship, as well as the acquisition of an industrial space that was refurbished to become the Lokal 16 cultural centre. Today, Theatre 16 has around 150 members. Read more about Pod Theatre 16 here: [teater16.se/poddteater16.html](http://teater16.se/poddteater16.html).

Like all Theatre 16 activities, Pod Theatre 16 was a suggestion from young people, and the project has made more people able and willing to get involved.

"The way you want to meet the audience is much more free," says Jonas Jansson, project manager for Pod Theatre 16, explaining that young people who previously didn't want to participate due to stage fright can now do so, as well as those who don't have a strong interest in culture, because they can focus on more technical tasks, like creating sound effects. In addition, the concept of podcast theatre is relatively open to interpretation, which attracts new young people.

"We want to renew the concept of radio theatre. It can be anything from a musical to a documentary," says Jansson.

The aim is for Poddteater 16 to help tell everyone's stories, and reach the silent minority not previously heard on the traditional cultural stage. But also to create a positive climate for young people to continue developing rural areas.

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*"We want to tell everyone's stories, and reach the silent minority"*

*Jonas Jansson, project manager*





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# IF THE ASSOCIATION CEASES

Of course, it's sad when it happens, but sometimes you must dissolve an association. It typically doesn't need to be a big deal. The association may have existed for a long time, but at the annual meeting no one wants to be on the board or pursue the work.

In this situation, the association is to be dissolved. Do it immediately and save a lot of future hassle. If interest returns, it is easy to start a new association!



## DISSOLVING AN ASSOCIATION

The decision to dissolve the association must be regulated in the by-laws. Usually, it requires a decision by at least a two-thirds majority at an ordinary annual meeting. Sometimes it is necessary for the decision to be made at two consecutive annual meetings.



## THE ANNUAL MEETING DECIDES ON DISSOLUTION

Send a notice of the annual meeting to members of the association. The notice must be sent to members personally, for example by e-mail. It is also possible to have the invitation on the website, and just send a link via text message, e-mail or similar. The notice must state that dissolution is to be discussed at the meeting.



## VOTE ON DISSOLUTION

At the annual meeting, participants vote on whether or not to dissolve the association. If there are enough people willing to continue the association, it cannot be dissolved. The old board must then hand over all documents, passwords and files as soon as possible so that the new board can take over and run the association.



## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ASSOCIATION'S ASSETS?

The annual meeting decides where the remaining money and equipment shall go. Any money left over can be spent, for example, by throwing a final party or donating it to another organisation with the same purpose. The important thing is that no money or items may be donated to any private individual (purchasing items from the association at the same price as they would cost second-hand in a shop is of course fine).



## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISSOLUTION?

At the annual meeting, it is a good idea to choose one or more people to be responsible for the practical aspects of dissolution, such as paying debts, terminating contracts and accounts. Make sure money and equipment go where the annual meeting decided.



## CLOSE ACCOUNTS & CONTACT THE TAX AGENCY

The responsible person closes the association's bank account and any other accounts that remain. If the association had an organisation number, the dissolution must also be reported to the Tax Agency.

Read more at [skatteverket.se](http://skatteverket.se), search for "Avregistrera en förening".















### HELPING GROW KNOWLEDGE

At the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, the conditions of youth and civil society are in focus. We help grow the knowledge that decision-makers use when prioritising interventions for young people and civil society. We spread this knowledge on both the national and European level. We also distribute government grants that enable small and large organisations to carry out their activities. This gives young people the chance to volunteer, study or intern in other European countries.