



**My Language, My Homeland. Recommendations for
the Improvement of the Kurdish-Nordic Literary Field**

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of Ministers**

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- Vad händer med välfärden i Norden?

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Contents

Preface	6
Why a report on Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries?	7
Methodologies	8
Kurds, the Kurdish language and Kurdish literature briefly	9
Kurds and Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries	10
Current conditions and challenges	12
The Kurdish literary field in the Nordic countries	12
Genres	12
The languages	12
Living conditions	12
What kind of literature is translated into Kurdish in the Nordic countries?	13
Publishing Kurdish literature	14
Reaching the readers	15
Contacts with the countries of origin	16
Communication and cooperation with other writers	17
Recommendations	18
Bibliography	20
Kurdish cultural organizations in the Nordic countries	21
Author	22
Appendix 1:	23
Questionnaire in English	
Appendix 2:	25
Questionnaire in Kurmanji	
Appendix 3:	27
Questionnaire in Sorani	
Appendix 4:	28
Questionnaire in Finnish	
Appendix 5:	30
Questionnaire in Swedish	

Preface

The report in your hand deals with the situation of the Kurdish literary field in the North.

During the Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health initiated together with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment a Nordic project entitled “An Open and Innovative Nordic Region with Well-being People in 2020 – Equal Opportunities to Welfare, Education, Culture and Work” (Norden 2020).

Welfare, parity and equality, cultural diversity and socially sustainable development are the cross-sectorial themes of the three-year project (2016–2018). The different activities (seminars, conferences and reports) within the Norden 2020 project aim to frame the future development of the Nordic welfare states as well as their challenges and possibilities to secure the progress and success, as assessed by the five member states: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and by Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland.

The Nordic Region is currently undergoing profound structural and demographic changes, as is the rest of the world. The age structure in the Nordic countries and financing of the welfare, the future of working life, and international political turmoil and migration are some of the issues affecting life and politics in the region.

One subtheme of the Norden 2020 project is multilingualism in the Nordic countries. This theme is covered by the project “Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic countries” carried out by the Culture for All Service and financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The project focuses on the language rights of the authors and readers, and on intercultural dialogue through literature. It makes visible organizations, projects and practices from different Nordic countries and supports their interaction. The concrete aims of the project include the collection and sharing of data related to multilingual expertise in the Nordic countries, the administration and promotion of the Nordic Multilingual Month (21 February–21 March, annually) and the realization of reports related to language-specific literary fields in the Nordic countries.

The report, *My Language, My Homeland. Recommendations for the Improvement of the Kurdish-Nordic Literary Field*, is the third language-specific report carried out by the project. The study aims to map the present state of the multilingual Kurdish literary field in the Nordic countries, to diagnose its greatest challenges and to develop suggestions for improving the efficiency of the field. The report includes 8 recommendations on how the role of Kurdish-Nordic literature could be strengthened.

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Why a report on Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries?

In terms of the number of speakers, Kurdish is one of the major immigrant languages in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. In Sweden it comes fifth after Swedish, Finnish, Serbo-Croatian and Arabic¹, spoken by almost 100 000 people.² In Finland Kurdish is spoken by more than 13 000 people³ and it comes seventh after Finnish, Swedish, Russian, Estonian, Arabic and Somali. In Norway, too, Kurdish is among the dominant immigrant languages⁴. In Denmark there are no official statistics on the home languages of the population. However, even there one can, based on the countries of origin of the immigrants, see that Kurdish is among the most widely spoken immigrant languages, spoken by some 30 000 people.⁵

The Kurdish-inhabited area in the Middle East, Kurdistan, is politically divided between Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Kurds are minorities in those countries, and the right to exercise their culture, including communicating in their language, has been severely restricted.⁶ Kurds living in the Nordic countries come from all the mentioned countries. Like many other immigrant groups, Kurdish immigrants have settled in the Nordic countries, many due political or security reasons, some seeking work. Due to the severe restrictions on the Kurdish language and culture in Kurdistan – now especially in Turkey and Iran but previously also in Iraq and Syria – many Kurds have fled to Europe, including the Nordic countries, in order to be able to preserve their Kurdish identity and for example freely use their native language.

This has been especially important for Kurdish writers.

Publishing in Kurdish was entirely outlawed in Turkey up until the 1990s.⁷ Although not fully prohibited in Iran, Iraq or Syria, in these countries, too, there have been – and largely continue to be – severe restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in the public domain, for example in education, commerce and broadcasting.⁸

Especially following the Turkish military coup of 1980⁹, many Kurdish writers left Turkey. Some of them settled in France, some in Germany or the UK, but a majority of them found a new home in Sweden – a number of them also in Denmark, Finland and Norway. The second wave of Kurdish writers arrived in the 1990s, this time from Iran and Iraq. The third wave of Kurdish writers has been arriving in the Nordic countries following the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011.

An active period for Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries began in the 1980s when poets like Cegerxwîn (1903 – 1984), novelists like Mehmed Uzun (1953 – 2007) and authors of children books like Mehmed Emîn Bozarslan (born 1935) started to publish their works in Sweden. In the 1990s, when Kurdish language and literature was still under severe restriction and pressure in Kurdistan, a dozen or so Kurdish literary and cultural journals were published in Sweden, some more and some less regularly.¹⁰ Hundreds, if not thousands, of different Kurdish book titles were published mainly in Sweden¹¹, but to a lesser degree also in Denmark and Norway. Kurdish writers have also founded a writers' union in Sweden¹² as well as a Kurdish library located in Stockholm for

1 Språken i Sverige (Languages in Sweden) <https://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/om-oss/for-dig-i-skolan/sprak-for-dig-i-skolan/spraken-i-sverige.html> (in Swedish). See also *Språktidningen* 2/2018 at <http://spraktidningen.se> (also in Swedish).

2 Kurder i Sverige (Kurds in Sweden): https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurder_i_Sverige (in Swedish).

3 Suurimmat vieraskielisten määrät (Largest groups of foreign-language speakers): http://vertinet2.stat.fi/verti/graph/Graphserver.htm?ifile=quicktables/Maahanmuuttajat/kieli_2&lang=3&x=540&gskey=2 (in Finnish).

4 Country Report on multilingual issues, Norway: <http://www.mek.oszk.hu/minerva/html/dok/norway.pdf>

5 Kurdere i Danmark (Kurds in Denmark): <https://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE5105449/Fakta-Kurdere-i-Danmark/> <https://www.information.dk/kultur/2007/08/danmarks-stoerste-sprog> or <https://jiyan.dk/2011/10/hvor-mange-kurdere-bor-der-i-danmark/> (all in Danish).

6 Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove & Phillipson, Robert (1993): Linguistic Rights for the Kurds. https://www.academia.edu/32244233/LINGUISTIC_HUMAN_RIGHTS_FOR_THE_KURDS

7 Ibid.

8 UNPO report: Iranian Kurdistan: Restriction On Use of Minority Languages: <http://www.unpo.org/article/15402>

9 Turkish military coup of 1980: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Turkish_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat

10 Li Swêdê Kovargerîya Kurdî (Kurdish journalism in Sweden): <http://www.kulturname.com/?p=5017> (in Kurdish).

11 Sweden; home of the Kurdish books in exile: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/culture/080620161>

12 Komeleya Nivîskarên Kurd li Swêdê (Kurdish Writers' Union in Sweden): <http://niviskar.se>

gathering and providing materials in Kurdish and about Kurds in other languages.¹³

Publication in Kurdish has unfortunately decreased in the Nordic countries over the past years.¹⁴ This is partly due to the rising dominance of digital publishing and also due to a short-lived improvement in printing opportunities for Kurdish literature in Iraqi and Turkish parts of Kurdistan.¹⁵ Another reason is that the new generation, people who have grown up and been educated in the Nordic countries, mostly prefer to read and write in the official or dominant language of their respective host countries.

Although Kurds are a relatively new minority group in the Nordic countries, Kurdish literature already has a history of several decades of activity in the Nordic countries, with hundreds of books and dozens of journals published as well as at least one library and one writers' union. On the other hand, currently no Kurdish journal is published on a regular basis in the Nordic countries, the majority of the publishing houses have been closed down and even the only Kurdish library is under threat of closing.¹⁶

The brief history of Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries is a good case study of how a minority or immigrant literature can flourish or decline – and especially how it can be helped to flourish or prevented from declining. Maintaining and developing literature in the Kurdish languages require new initiatives. The study overviews the conditions in which the Kurdish writers in the Nordic countries live and sums up their recommendations for improving the conditions.

Methodologies

This report is the third language-specific report on literary fields in non-dominant languages in the Nordic countries, commissioned by Culture for All as a part of the project "Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic Countries". The aim of the report is to map the Kurdish literary field in the Nordic countries. The report is based on printed and online sources as well as questionnaires and interviews.

The general information on the Kurds, the Kurdish language(s) and Kurdish literature presented in this report is from various books, articles and websites. Both printed and electronic material in Kurdish and English has been used. However, for the reader to have easier access to further information, the reference is usually to electronic material in English.

In researching the current situation of Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries, the main applied methods are a questionnaire and personal interviews with Kurdish authors, translators, editors and publishers living in the Nordic countries. A questionnaire in Kurdish (in both Kurmanji and Sorani), English, Swedish and Finnish was sent to 73 relevant individuals or institutions. All the different language versions of the questionnaire are attached to the end of this report. 46 fully or partly answered questionnaires were returned, all in Kurdish (31 in Kurmanji, 15 in Sorani). 24 of the answers came from Sweden, 8 from Finland, 7 from Denmark, and 5 from Norway. Two of the answers came from Iraqi Kurdistan, from individual writers who said they currently live partly in Kurdistan and partly in Sweden. 13 respondents answered "woman" to the question concerning gender, 27 "man", the rest did not answer the question.

All the respondents were born in the Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Syrian Kurdish-inhabited areas, except for two who were born in Armenia, which also has a significant Kurdish population. 12 of the respondents had settled in the Nordic countries in the 1980s, 16 in the 1990s, 11 in the 2000s, and 7 in the 2010s. All but three of the respondents had provided their phone number and were subsequently contacted for further discussion on Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries. Out of the 43 contacted, 37 were reached and interviewed over the phone.

In May 2018 a two-day trip was made from Helsinki to Copenhagen to interview four Kurdish writers and/or literary translators. Individual meetings were carried out with three writers. One planned meeting was cancelled due to a change in the interviewee's personal schedule, and the interview was later performed via video from Helsinki. In September 2018 a two-day trip was made from Helsinki to Stockholm to interview Kurdish writers, literary translators and/or publishers.

13 The Kurdish Library in Stockholm: <http://kurdlib.org/>

14 Sweden; home of the Kurdish books in exile: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/culture/080620161>

15 For current difficulties in different parts of Kurdistan, see below.

16 Kurdiska Biblioteket fyller år – Stötta Kurdiska Biblioteket (The Kurdish Library celebrates its anniversary – support the library): <https://foreningenbis.com/2017/10/09/kurdiska-biblioteket-fyller-ar-stotta-kurdiska-bibliotek/> (in Swedish).

Two writers were interviewed individually, then two writers and two translators together, and then a publisher individually. The Kurdish Library (Kitêbxaneya Kurdî, Kurdiska Biblioteket)¹⁷ in Stockholm was also visited and its manager interviewed. All the eight respondents of the questionnaire in Finland were subsequently interviewed personally in summer 2018: four in or around Helsinki, three in Turku, and one in Lahti. All the five respondents in Norway were subsequently interviewed personally over the phone, four of them with videophone.

The written and oral answers to the questionnaire and the opinions expressed in the interviews are summarized in the section “Current conditions and challenges” as well as in the section “Recommendations”.

Kurds, the Kurdish language and Kurdish literature briefly

Kurds are an ethnic, cultural and linguistic group of estimated 30 to 40 million¹⁸ people living mainly in Kurdistan, a geographic region divided between the international borders of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. There are also approximately 2 million Kurds living outside Kurdistan, especially in Europe, due to forced or voluntary migration over the recent decades.¹⁹

The native language of the Kurds is the Kurdish language²⁰, one of the Iranian languages of the Indo-European language family. It is not related to the neighboring languages, Arabic (a Semitic language) and Turkish (an Altaic language). It is related to the official language of Iran, Persian, but Kurdish and Persian are not mutually understandable.

The Kurdish language (or languages) comprises three main dialect groups: northern (Kurmanji), central (Sorani) and southern (variedly called Feyli, Kalhuri, Pehlewani, Kirmashani etc.). The dialect groups are not always mutually understandable, and they are sometimes even considered different languages.²¹ Kurmanji is estimated to be the native language of at least one half of the Kurds (15 to 20 million).²² It is spoken by nearly all the Kurds in Turkey and Syria and by a minority of Kurds in Iraq and Iran. Sorani is the

majority (approximately 2/3) language/dialect of the Kurds of Iran and Iraq. The third main variant, so-called South Kurdish, is spoken by approximately 2 million Kurds in the southernmost Kurdish-speaking areas in Iran and Iraq and is sometimes called Fayli, Kalhuri or Kirmashani, depending on the region.

Kurdish written literature began to thrive in the early 15th century in the main dialect, Kurmanji or Northern Kurdish. The first Kurdish book appeared in 1425 and is attributed to Elî Herîrî (sometimes transliterated as Ali Hariri in Western languages). The best known poets of the era are Melayê Cizîrî (transliterated in the West as Mela-yi Jiziri) and Feqê Teyran (also Fiqh-i Teyran). The most renowned classical work is *Mem û Zîn*, a romantic, tragic, nationalistic poetry work by Ehmedê Xanî (transliterated as Ahmed-i Khani), often considered the national epic of the Kurds. Up until the 19th century written Kurdish was almost exclusively restricted to poetry, whereas Kurdish scholars used Arabic, Persian or Turkish for writing scientific, historical and religious works. In the 19th century the other main Kurdish language/dialect, Sorani, also began to be used for literary purposes, again initially only in poetry.

The first Kurdish newspaper, published mainly in Kurmanji, appeared in 1898. Prose began to appear more extensively in Kurdish no earlier than at the beginning of the 20th century. The first five Kurdish novels were written by Ereb Şemo (official name Arab Shamilov, 1897 – 1978) between 1935 and 1969 in Kurmanji in the Soviet Union. The first novel written in Sorani appeared in 1972.

Kurdish has been written in at least three different scripts: Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic. Until the beginning of the 20th century the Arabic alphabet was used exclusively. In the 1920s and 1930s various Latin alphabets were introduced, of which the so-called Hawar Alphabet, named after the *Hawar* newspaper which started to use it in the early 1930s, is now the standard Latin alphabet for Kurdish. In Turkey, Syria, Iran and Armenia, and partly in Iraq, the alphabet is in use for writing Kurmanji, although in Iraq Kurmanji is mostly written in the Arabic alphabet.

Sorani is written almost exclusively in the Arabic alphabet, although a few books have also been

17 The Kurdish Library in Stockholm: <http://kurdlib.org/>

18 The World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

19 Kurdish population in diaspora: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_population#Diaspora

20 Omniglot's article on the Kurdish languages: <https://www.omniglot.com/writing/kurdish.htm>

21 Ethnologue's listing of the Kurdish languages: <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/kur>

22 Omniglot's article on the Kurdish languages: <https://www.omniglot.com/writing/kurdish.htm>

published in the Latin alphabet. The Latin alphabet is sometimes also used in shorter TV texts, brochures etc. It is moreover used quite extensively in informal communication in emails, social media etc.

Kurds living in the former Soviet Union used to write Kurmanji in the Cyrillic alphabet especially in the period between 1940's and 1990's, but the Cyrillic alphabet for Kurdish has almost entirely been abandoned by now. Many works that were first written and printed in the Cyrillic alphabet have recently been reprinted in the Latin alphabet.

Although the written literature in Kurmanji began several centuries before the written literature in Sorani, in the second half of the 20th century the Sorani written literature thrived much more strongly than Kurmanji. This was however due to the extensive restriction, almost total ban, on publishing and broadcasting in Kurdish in Turkey, where the majority of the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds live. On the other hand, in Iraq, where Sorani is the majority language of the Kurds, Kurds have always enjoyed a relatively strong cultural, although not always a political, autonomy.

Due to the restrictions on the Kurdish language in Turkey especially in the past, almost the entire body of Kurmanji literature produced between the 1920s and the 1990s was published abroad. Only in the 1990s did a relative uplift occur for Kurdish literature.²³

Kurds and Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries

The Kurdish diaspora emerged in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s when many Kurds, together with ethnic Turks, arrived in the West and North European countries as "guest workers." Although some returned to Turkey after some months or years, the majority settled permanently in the host countries and later brought their families there too.

Following the military coup of 1980 in Turkey and the imprisonment of many Kurds, including writers and activists, a large number of Kurds took refuge in

European countries, especially in Sweden. They were followed then by Kurdish refugees, again including Kurdish writers and political activists, from Iraq and Iran, especially in the 1990s. These in turn are now followed by Kurdish refugees fleeing the ongoing civil war in Syria, again including many writers as well.²⁴

Kurds have established several cultural organizations into the Nordic countries, some concentrating on preserving the Kurdish culture and language, others centering more on the integration of Kurds into the Nordic societies, many doing both. An umbrella association of the Kurdish cultural organizations in Sweden, *Kurdiska Riksförbundet*²⁵, was founded in 1981. A similar association, *Kurdiliitto*²⁶, was founded in Finland in 2014.

The first Kurdish publishing house in the Nordic countries, *Roja Nû*, was founded in 1980. It started off by publishing mostly works of Kurdish writers mainly living in Nordic countries. Another publishing house, *Pencinar*²⁷, established in 1986, concentrated on publishing Kurdish oral literature as well as transliterating older Kurdish literature written in the Arabic alphabet into the Latin alphabet and reprinting it. A third publishing house, *Apec*²⁸, established in 1988, concentrated on publishing children's books, especially ones translated from Swedish into Kurdish. A fourth publishing house, *Nûdem*, released both modern Kurdish works as well as works by Nordic and world authors translated into Kurdish.

Kurds began publishing their first newspaper in the Nordic countries in 1979: a monthly Stockholm-based newspaper called *Armanç*. It concentrated mainly on Kurdish issues in Kurdistan, whereas another monthly magazine, *Berbang*, established in 1981 and written partly in Kurmanji and partly in Swedish, emphasized issues related to the Kurds in Sweden and their integration into Swedish society.

They were followed by several monthly or quarterly magazines in the 1980s and 1990s concentrating more on literature. *Çira*, *Dugir*, *Nûdem* and *Helwest* were all general literary quarterlies publishing a wide range of literary works, including poems, short stories, excerpts of novels, literary reviews, book presentations,

23 Clémence Scalbert-Yücel: Emergence and equivocal autonomization of a Kurdish literary field in Turkey: https://www.academia.edu/26032561/Emergence_and_equivocal_autonomization_of_a_Kurdish_literary_field_in_Turkey

24 For a list of Kurdish writers in Sweden, see: <https://www.immi.se/kultur/authors/kurder/> (in Swedish)

25 Federation of the Kurdish associations in Sweden: <http://www.fkks.se/> (in Kurdish and Swedish)

26 Kurdiliitto or Federation of the Kurdish Associations in Finland: <http://kurdiliitto.fi/> (in Kurdish and Finnish).

27 Publishing house *Pencinar*: <http://www.pencinar.se> (in Kurdish).

28 Publishing house *Apec*: <http://apecpublishing.com/om-oss/> (in Swedish and Kurdish).

articles on literary history, writer interviews etc. Beside these general literary magazines, a few specialized magazines have also been published: the educational magazine *Dengê Mamoste*, the theater and cinema magazine *Şano û Sinema*, the humor magazine *Mirkut*, and *Nûdem Werger*, a quarterly publishing only translated literary works. Although all these magazines were published in Sweden, Kurds living in the other Nordic countries took an active in writing in them.

A Kurdish library was founded in 1997 in Stockholm to preserve Kurdish literary works and serve the Kurdish readership.²⁹ In addition to acquiring books and material in Kurdish and about Kurds in other languages, the library also organizes seminars and gatherings related to Kurdish culture as well as integration into Swedish society.

However, by the beginning of the 2000s all Kurdish literary journals in the Nordic countries ceased to appear in print anymore. Most of them were simply closed down but some went online. They were replaced by new electronic literary magazines, some appearing monthly, others more or less regularly otherwise. The first Kurdish online literary magazine, *Mehname*, published during 1999 – 2006, was launched in Finland but it attracted Kurdish writers and readers globally.

Several other Kurdish cultural and literary portals were launched from the Nordic countries, and some of them still remain active after two decades, while others have disappeared after a couple of years.

29 The Kurdish Library in Stockholm: <http://kurdlib.org/> (in Kurdish and Swedish).

Current conditions and challenges

The Kurdish literary field in the Nordic countries

In the following chapter I will map the conditions under which Kurdish literature is produced in the Nordic countries and the obstacles the writers face. One of the biggest challenges for Kurdish writers living in the Nordic countries is how to afford to concentrate on writing literature as a full-time occupation. Another challenge is how to find financing for the publishing of their books and also how to reach their readership.

Genres

Out of the 46 persons who answered the questionnaire, 14 said that they only write literature, four said that they only translate literature and the remaining 28 said that they both write and translate literature. 3 of the respondents said that they are also involved in publishing and distributing Kurdish literature.

Concerning literature genres, 8 said that as far as literature is concerned, they write only poetry, while 7 said that they have published only novels. But they all had written also short stories and/or poems. 5 said that they had published only short stories. Again 5 said that they had published novels and short stories. 3 had published poems and short stories and again 3 had published novels and poetry. One respondent wrote that he had published both novels and short stories as well as poetry.

22 of the respondents answered that their books (or books translated by them) are mainly targeted at adult readers only. 7 said that they write or translate children's books. Others said that they have written or translated books for both adults and children.

The languages

Out of the 46 persons who answered the questionnaire, 32 said that they had written literature only in Kurdish. 14 said that they had written literature in one or more languages: 4 in Kurdish and Arabic, 4 in Kurdish and Turkish, 2 in Kurdish and Persian, 2 in Kurdish, Arabic and Swedish, 1 in Kurdish, Turkish and Swedish, and 1 in Kurdish, Arabic and Norwegian. Of

those who said that they had written literature only in Kurdish, two wrote that they had written literature in both Kurmanji and Sorani.

Although the majority answered that they had written literature only in Kurdish, all the interviewed persons said that they use one or more other languages on almost a daily basis in their everyday life. Almost all the interviewees were at least trilingual and spoke: 1) Kurdish, 2) the official or dominant language of their country of origin (Arabic, Armenian, Persian or Turkish), and 3) the official or dominant language of their country of current residence (Danish, Finnish, Norwegian or Swedish).

Living conditions

All the writers and/or translators who answered the questionnaire said that they are currently active in writing Kurdish literature and/or translating literature into Kurdish. This means that currently Kurdish literature is actively written in all the four Nordic countries that have a significant Kurdish-speaking population: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

However, this does not mean that all Kurdish writers in the Nordic countries have remained active writers of literature. The results of the questionnaire can partly be explained by the fact that mainly currently active writers were contacted for the study. Of those who were contacted, probably only active writers answered and the others did not.

Even the active writers were mainly employed in other fields than literature. Out of the 34 who specified their main job in the questionnaire or in the subsequent interviews, 12 were working as teachers (mainly teaching Kurdish to elementary school children but some also as class teachers), 9 as non-literary translators and interpreters, 7 as entrepreneurs, 2 as politicians and 1 as a lawyer. 2 were unemployed but looking for new opportunities. Only 2 respondents answered that they are currently working full-time as writers or literary translators owing to a grant they have received for their literary work until the end of 2018.

The majority of the writers were able to write or translate literature only in their pastime. Some had

opted for a part-time non-literary job so they could have more time for writing or translating literature. A few of the respondents mentioned that they had chosen “unemployment” to be able to concentrate on writing or translating literature.

The lack of the possibilities to write full-time was seen as a major obstacle. Lack of time combined with difficulties to find a publisher caused despair among many of the writers. Some had resorted to their second or even their third language to ensure that their works would be published, although they were sure that they would be more capable and creative in their native Kurdish language. Many of the interviewees said that they did not have enough information or skills in the official language of their country of residence to apply for possible grants and other financial support for their literary work. Some of the interviewees were disappointed with the outcomes of their many applications. Some had received grants in the 1980s and 1990s but never since, even though they had presented all the required information about their working plans. All those who had previously received financial support for their literary work, and also those who were working with a grant at the time of the interview, were of the opinion that it has become far more difficult to receive grants.

The positive experiences of successfully applying for grants were almost exclusively from Sweden, with only two from Norway. In Denmark and Finland none of the interviewees had received a grant, although a dozen or so applications had been submitted in both countries to several state and non-state institutions, sometimes two or three applications by the same applicant but to different funds. Receiving grants from the Nordic countries is essential for Kurdish writers because very few of them are able to receive financial support for their writing from elsewhere.

Starting from 2000, some Kurdish writers and translators have received grants or other support either from the Kurdish regional government in Iraq or from some Kurdish-administrated municipalities in eastern Turkey. However, the grants and other financial support from those regions have been too modest to enable them to afford to live in expensive Nordic countries without having to work on the side.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq suffered harshly from the financial crisis of 2008. There was a sharp decline in the financial support for literary and other cultural activities. Not only did this mean an end of support for writers, especially those Kurdish writers who lived

outside the autonomous Kurdistan region, but also a shutting down of most of the publishing houses and cultural journals that had previously published also works by many Kurdish writers and translators living in the Nordic countries.

In Turkey the situation was slowly improving for Kurdish literature and literary activities from 2010 until the failed Turkish military coup of 2016. It was not the Kurds who orchestrated the coup but the Turkish army, which has traditionally been hostile towards the Kurds and their aspiration for cultural and political rights. Nevertheless, the government exercised a harsh crackdown on all opposition politicians and all media and cultural activities that were not under directives of the government. Many Kurdish parliamentarians were arrested and a majority of the Kurdish mayors in the Kurdish region in eastern Turkey were dismissed. The only Kurdish daily newspaper in Turkey, *Azadiya Welat*, as well as the two main institutes concentrating on the Kurdish language and culture were closed down. The same fate was shared by many weekly, monthly or quarterly Kurdish magazines and journals as well as publishing houses.

What kind of literature is translated into Kurdish in the Nordic countries?

Out of the 46 persons who answered the questionnaire, 32 said that they translate literature into the Kurdish language. However, only four wrote that they work solely as translators, whereas 28 said that they both write and translate literature.

According to the answers to the questionnaire and the subsequent interviews, literary translation into Kurdish in the Nordic countries is mainly done either from the official or state languages of the Kurdish inhabited areas in the Middle East (Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Armenian) or from the official languages of the Nordic countries (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian or Finnish). Even some world classics have been translated into Kurdish from the Swedish (and together with Turkish) translations, for instance Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk* and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

However, the vast majority of the translations from the Nordic languages are works by Nordic authors. A majority of them are works by Swedish authors, both classical and modern, translated from Swedish; largely children's books especially from Astrid Lindberg, but also adult literature, both prose and poetry, by for instance August Strindberg and Karin Boye. The

translations from Danish are almost exclusively Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and the translations from Norwegian are a couple of Henrik Ibsen's plays. No major literary work is known to have been translated from Finnish into Kurdish and published. The translations of Finnish literature via other languages include Aleksis Kivi's *Seven Brothers* and Mika Waltari's *The Egyptian*, both based on their French translations. However, a large anthology of Finnish poetry – both classical and modern – has been translated by the author of this report from Finnish into Kurdish but has not been published yet.

The translations of Nordic literature into Kurdish concentrate mainly on children's literature. Four authors of children's literature reign among the translations: Hans Christian Andersen both from Danish in Denmark and via other languages elsewhere

Publishing Kurdish literature

The earliest books written by the respondents of the questionnaire were published in 1980 and 1981, and the most recent ones in 2017 and 2018. Most of the books written by the respondents were published between 2009 and 2012.

3 respondents had published more than 10 written and/or translated books, 8 respondents more than 5 books, and 7 respondents only one book.

The number of printed books published by the respondents is as follows:

Of this total number of books, 108 were published in Sweden, 63 in Turkey, 47 in Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan), 14 in Norway, 8 in Denmark, and 3 in Finland. Sweden was the dominant – almost exclusive – country of

Genre	Number of different titles
Written novels	73
Written short story books	16
Written poetry books	24
Written children's books	8
Written works on literary history or literary criticism	5
Translated novels	67
Translated short story books	18
Translated poetry books	7
Translated children's books	23
Translated works on literary history or literary criticism	2
Total	243

as well as Astrid Lindgren, Sven Nordqvist, Ulf Löfgren and Gunilla Wolde from Swedish.

However, as many of the interviewees mentioned, translations of Nordic literature into Kurdish are produced quite randomly, dependent on individual translators and possible financial support for translating and/or publishing a book. No larger translation program or plan has been established by Kurds or their host countries for translating and publishing Nordic literature based on the importance of the literary works and/or the needs of the Kurdish readers.

publication in the 1980s and 1990s for the books by the authors and translators who answered. However, in the 2000s Sweden it has fallen behind Turkey and Iraq.

Since the beginning of the 1980s a dozen or so small Kurdish publishing houses (such as Roja Nû and Nûdem) could be found in the Nordic countries, concentrating mainly in and around Stockholm. However, almost half of the publishing houses published fewer than 50 books. Some of them concentrated on publishing books by a few authors, sometimes mainly books by the owner of the publishing house her-/himself. Currently, there is only one Kurdish publishing house active in the Nordic

countries, Apec Publishing (Apec Förlag) in Sweden.³⁰

Self-publishing is very common among Kurdish authors and quite common even among the translators. Out of the 37 interviewed persons, 14 said that they had debuted through self-publishing, and 6 of them had self-published all their books.

Although all the respondents had had at least one of their books published, virtually all of them complained about difficulties with getting their books published. All the interviewed persons except three said that they had one or more books ready for publishing but they have not found a publishing house. Four of the interviewees said that they have had more than five books ready for publishing for more than five years without finding a publisher.

Some of the poets and short story writers had published their works online. Some of them said they had done so because it is an easy way to reach readers. Others said that they had resorted to this form of publishing after failing to find a publisher to publish their works in print. Some of the respondents in this group expressed their reluctance to publish their works online since they are still hopeful of finding a publisher and they fear that after publishing online no publisher would be willing to publish the readily available material.

The novel writers were nearly all reluctant to publish their works online, since many of them believed that novels are too long to be read online. This was the opinion of the older generation. Some of the younger interviewees, on the other hand, were of the opinion that everything written in Kurdish should be brought online. They remarked that readers of Kurdish literature are scattered all around the globe and it would otherwise be too difficult and expensive for the authors and readers to reach each other.

Reaching the readers

The majority of the readers of Kurdish literature are of course in Kurdistan, quite far away from the Kurdish authors who live in the Nordic countries. Reaching the main readership of Kurdish literature was just a couple of decades ago an extremely difficult task. This was not only because of expensive shipping prices for books from the Nordic countries to the various parts of Kurdistan, but especially because of the ban on Kurdish books in Iran, Syria and Turkey as well as the trading embargo on Iraq that prohibited sending and receiving

goods, among them also books.

Although the political and economic bans have partly been lifted – and partly remain, especially as far as Iran is concerned – many obstacles still persist.

A majority of the Kurdish books in the Nordic countries are published by small publishing houses with limited or no resources or strategies for marketing and promotion. Many authors have to resort to self-publishing with modest resources for the publishing itself, let alone for advertising and marketing. Due to limited resources many authors and publishing houses end up publishing a very small number of copies, often 100 to 1000, of each title. Therefore a majority of the published titles might soon not be available for customers.

Dozens of small publishing houses published Kurdish books in the Nordic countries between the late 1980s and the early 2010s, some of them up to a couple of hundred books (e.g. the publishing houses Nûdem and Pencinar), others dozens (e.g. the publishing houses Helwest and Weşanên Welat), and some only a few titles (e.g. the Xanî & Bateyî publishing house in Copenhagen). However, none of these publishing houses is currently active. This doesn't only mean that they are not currently publishing new titles, but that even their older titles are no longer to be found for sale anywhere.

Many authors need to resort to republishing their books to make them available after their former publishing houses have become inactive. Some of the titles published in the 1980s and 1990s in the Nordic countries have been republished in the 2000s in Turkey or Iran. However, not all authors have the "luxury" of making their works available for their readers since even new literary works of high quality do not always find support to be published, let alone financial support for writing them.

Many of the interviewees for this survey also complained that whether a Kurdish literary work is published and promoted is by no means always dependent on the literary quality of the work. They stated that it often depends on the ability of the author to network with publishing houses, cultural institutions and – especially in the Kurdish areas of the Middle East – political decision makers. Many also complained that the works of a bunch of well-established authors are published and promoted year in, year out regardless of whether they produce new, high-quality works or not,

30 Website of the publishing house Apec: <http://apexpublishing.com/>

whereas new writers are mostly neglected.

The decline of old Kurdish publishing houses and the emerging of new ones in the Nordic countries was viewed as almost inevitable by the interviewees of this survey. This is largely because almost all the publishing houses have been established and run by one individual enthusiast, often an amateur with little or no previous working experience, let alone education, in the publishing business.

Libraries were viewed as essential by the interviewees of the survey for the task of preserving and keeping the published Kurdish literary works available for the readers despite the turmoil in the Kurdish publishing arena. The Kurdish library in Stockholm Kitêbxaneya Kurdî/Kurdiska biblioteket³¹ was mentioned as playing a central role in preserving Kurdish books many of which can no longer be found anywhere else in the world. Two of the interviewees described the Kurdish library in Stockholm as “the Kurdish national library” with no counterpart anywhere else, not even in Kurdistan.

The Kurdish library in Stockholm operates according to the general library system in Sweden. It lends books for readers all around Sweden. Interviewees residing in other Nordic countries complained that they couldn't borrow books from the library. The director of the library welcomed the idea of enlarging the scope of its activities and hoped for cooperation between the national libraries of the Nordic countries to make this possible, for instance under the supervision of the Nordic Council of Ministries.

Contacts with the countries of origin

All the writers who answered the questionnaire and/or were interviewed for the survey were born in Kurdistan or other Kurdish-populated areas. They all keep some degree of contact with their country or region of origin, some even with other Kurdish-populated areas, especially with the Kurdish-administered Iraqi Kurdistan. Some regularly visit Kurdish areas and sometimes write and also publish and/or distribute their books there personally. Others cannot visit their country of origin due to fear of persecution by the governments (especially in Iran and Turkey) or due to

the general unsafe situation in the area (especially in war-torn Syria and Iraq).

Throughout most of the 20th century publishing and broadcasting in Kurdish language in the Kurdish areas was either heavily restricted (in Iran and Syria) or banned altogether (in Turkey)³². Only in Iraq did Kurdish language and literature enjoy relative freedom, but on the other hand, the security situation in the Kurdish-populated Iraqi Kurdistan was even worse than in the Kurdish regions of the other mentioned countries due to the Iraqi government's harsh stand against the Kurdish calls for broader autonomy. Kurdish writers in and outside the different parts of Kurdistan have usually had to publish their books abroad. After the first waves of Kurdish workers from Turkey to the European market in the 1970s and 1980s and Kurdish refugees from Iraq to Europe in the 1980s and 1990s several hundred Kurdish books were published in several European countries, especially in Sweden and Germany. In the 1990s numerous Kurdish language newspapers and journals were published in Europe, a majority of them in Sweden. Although some of the papers published daily and political news, most of them concentrated on culture and literature.

Kurdish writers were however unable to reach their wider audience living in Kurdistan. It was either forbidden to distribute their books in the Kurdish area (in Iran, Syria and Turkey) or extremely difficult (in Iraq due to the security situation and the economic embargo imposed by Western powers during the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.)

At the beginning of the 2000s, many Kurdish writers living in diaspora were able to publish their books in the Kurdish-administered Iraqi Kurdistan due to a favorable economic turn in the area. However, in the wake of the global economic crisis that began in 2008 and the political impasse with the Iraqi central government, the region's economy has been severely damaged³³, heavily affecting also cultural and literary activities.

Another country where Kurdish literature thrived in the early 2000s was Turkey: both in the Kurdish-populated southeastern region and in the major Turkish cities, especially Istanbul. However, following the resurgence of violence between the Turkish army and Kurdish

31 The Kurdish library <http://kurdlib.org/>

32 *New York Times*: Amid Turkey's Purge, a Renewed Attack on Kurdish: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/world/middleeast/amid-turkeys-purge-a-renewed-attack-on-kurdish-culture.html>

33 United States Institute of Peace: Kurdistan Region's Debt Crisis Threatens Iraq's Economy: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/05/kurdistan-regions-debt-crisis-threatens-iraqs-economy>

insurgents in 2015 and following the failed military coup of 2016, the Turkish government renewed its decades-old intolerance towards everything written or broadcast in Kurdish³⁴, except for its own Turkish nationalistic and Islamic propaganda through its state-run Kurdish TV channel “TRT Kurdî”.

Communication and cooperation with other writers

In Kurdistan Kurds and Kurdish writers are divided between several states whose governments have traditionally made travel between the neighboring countries quite difficult especially when it involves Kurdish cultural and literary activities.

In the Nordic countries Kurdish writers are dispersed between four or five states, some living in southern parts Denmark, others in the northernmost parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden. However, a majority of them are settled in or around the Nordic capitals: Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and especially Stockholm. Those living outside the Nordic capitals are usually settled in other major cities of the countries of residence, like Aarhus in Denmark, Bergen in Norway, Gothenburg in Sweden and Turku in Finland.

Kurdish writers living in or around Stockholm remarked in the interviews and/or in the questionnaire that they often meet face-to-face with other Kurdish writers. They have several gatherings a year, such as, for example, the official meetings of the Kurdish Writers’ Union in Sweden³⁵, seminars and book publication or promotion events, often on the premises of the Kurdish Library in Stockholm, in addition to less formal gatherings in public libraries, cafés and restaurants as well as at each other’s homes.

Kurdish writers in other Nordic countries have far fewer opportunities to meet face-to-face regularly. Compared to the Stockholm area, the number of Kurdish writers living near each other in other areas is considerably lower. There are no premises designated for Kurdish literary activities in the other Nordic capitals.

In the interviews for the present report many of the writers expressed their longing for more face-to-face meetings, communication and exchange of ideas with other writers. Some said that new technologies

have made it easier for them to communicate via videophones, emails, and social media groups etc. They compared the situation to the 1980s and the early 1990s when the only ways of communication were by snail mail or by phone and writers were often wary of calling Kurdish writers living in Kurdistan or sending them letters, in fear of causing them problems with the authorities.

Many interviewees complained that there is little or no communication between them and the writers writing in the official or dominant languages of their countries of residence, i.e. Danish, Finnish, Norwegian or Swedish. Very few of them had befriended authors who write in the main Nordic languages although they had other Nordic friends. For those who had “native-Nordic” authors as friends, the experience had been very positive. Sometimes the colleagues had worked together on, for instance, translating each other’s works.

The interviewees hoped for more communication and exchange of ideas between majority-language and minority-language writers. A few writers wished that authors who write in minority or immigrant languages could also be admitted as members in the main writers’ unions of their countries. This is not the case in some Nordic countries. For example, the two writers’ unions in Finland – the Union of Finnish Writers and the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland – require that a member must have published at least two books in either Finnish or Swedish.

34 *New York Times*: Amid Turkey’s Purge, a Renewed Attack on Kurdish: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/world/middleeast/amid-turkeys-purge-a-renewed-attack-on-kurdish-culture.html>

35 <http://niviskar.se/>

Recommendations

In the questionnaires and interviews for this report, Kurdish writers and translators were asked not only about the current conditions of working in writing or translating literature but also about their possible suggestions for improvements.

The following recommendations are based on the suggestions of the interviewees and/or respondents of the questionnaire. All the recommendations listed below are based on suggestions presented by at least three interviewees.

- 1) **Reading promotion.** Nordic public libraries and schools with Kurdish-speaking pupils or students should acquire Kurdish books (including audiobooks) for both adult and child readers. Literature reading events should be organized with Kurdish and other immigrant authors and translators where they would read their books to library visitors or to pupils in schools. One emphasis should be on literature written in plain language that can serve also those who have difficulties with reading.
- 2) **Support for writing and publishing.** The Kurdish literary field in the Nordic countries would need extra support and funding for publication and production costs. The writers would need support with writing applications, and in the evaluation of the applications the reviewers need to be familiar with the conditions of the Kurdish literary field. Not all literary works have to be published in the form of printed books; other viable formats include portals, blogs, vlogs or social media groups or platforms centered on producing or distributing literature.
- 3) **Production of digital material for Kurdish-speaking students and pupils.** Kurdish-language teachers and students in the Nordic countries are in desperate need of proper digital material for studying Kurdish to be used in schools, colleges and universities. The production of the material could be undertaken as a common Nordic project or under a national board of education, as was the case with for example the Somali language digital school material produced by the Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus,

Utbildningsstyrelsen).³⁶

- 4) **Introduction of creative writing for (future) writers.** Courses introducing creative writing should be organized, especially for adolescents, but also for adults. Many Kurds, having left their country of origin, their home, families and friends, and being forced to live in exile, would benefit from the opportunity to express their sufferings and other experiences in the form of literature. Creative writing courses can be held in Kurdish either by Kurdish writers or by native professionals from the country of residence, possibly with the help of an interpreter. The participants should be encouraged to write in their native language or in the main language of the country of residence, or possibly in both.
- 5) **Making borrowing of books from Nordic libraries possible for all residents of the Nordic countries regardless of country.** The Kurdish Library in Stockholm (Kitêbxaneya Kurdî, Kurdiska Biblioteket) is one of the largest Kurdish-language libraries globally. It has more than 14 000 different titles of books in Kurdish language or written in other languages about Kurds, in addition to a collection of dozens of journals and magazines. The library operates according to the Swedish system of public libraries. Borrowing material from the library is, however, possible only for people who live in Sweden. This makes it almost impossible for Kurds and persons studying the Kurdish language, culture or society to use. A system should be developed in cooperation with national or multilingual libraries in the Nordic countries that would enable borrowing material from the library by any resident of a Nordic country. The library receives financial support from the municipality of Stockholm, but the support has not been sufficient and the library desperately needs additional funding to be able to serve the audience. Shared Nordic funding would be welcome.
- 6) **Preparation of a plan for the translation of literature between Kurdish and the Nordic languages.** Currently the translation of Nordic literature into Kurdish is largely ad hoc with no

³⁶ Ko barbaar afka hoyo: <http://www11.edu.fi/somali4/> (in Somali).

overall plan or objective. A program or project should be prepared to plan which major literary works should be translated from the official or dominant languages of the Nordic countries (Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish) into Kurdish and which literary works should be translated from Kurdish into the Nordic languages. Alternatively, in each Nordic country a separate program should be drafted for the translation of literature from and into Kurdish. The translation program could also be a more general plan for translating literature of the host country into the main immigrant languages. The program should include both classics and prominent modern literary works. There should be some translated works for adults, some for adolescents and some for child readers or for their parents to read to them. The translation program should fund not only translations from the Nordic languages into Kurdish but also from Kurdish into the Nordic languages.

- 7) **Creating a common virtual platform for immigrant writers.** A common virtual platform for immigrant writers should be created and maintained in each Nordic country. The platform should include sections for writing in immigrant languages as well as sections introducing immigrant writers and excerpts of translations of their literary works into the main language of their Nordic country of residence and/or English.
- 8) **Enabling membership in various writers' unions.** The Kurdish Writers' Union in Sweden should be extended to become a Kurdish writers' union for all Kurdish writers and translators living in the Nordic countries. Membership in the national writers' unions of all the Nordic countries should be made possible also for authors who write in minority and immigrant languages and reside in the country, including Kurdish writers and translators. Events introducing majority and minority/immigrant writers to each other should be held and/or supported.

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Apec Publishing House: <http://apecpublishing.com/> (in Kurdish and Swedish)

Dibistana Kurdî ("Kurdish School" – a Sweden-based portal for providing teaching materials): <http://dibistanakurdi.com/>

Fêrgey Zimanî Kurdî Yagey Ziman ("Kurdish Language School" – a Sweden-based Kurdish portal for language learning): <http://diyako.yageyziman.com/>

Finnish-Kurdish Federation: <http://kurdiliitto.fi/>

FKKS (Union of the Kurdish associations in Sweden): <http://www.fkks.se/>

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The Kurdish Writers' Union in Sweden: www.niviskar.se

The Kurdish Library in Stockholm: <http://kurdlib.org/>

Xweza (a Denmark-based Kurdish publishing house): <http://xweza.com/>

Zimannas (a Finland-based blog on the Kurdish language and linguistics): <https://zimannas.wordpress.com/>

Author

Husein Muhammed (born in 1980 in Iraqi Kurdistan) is a Kurdish lawyer, writer and translator living in Finland since 1994. He has previously worked as a lawyer for asylum seekers for the Finnish Refugee Advice Center and as a specialist for the Ombudsman for Minorities as well as for the Center for Economic Development (ELY-keskus) and for the Municipality of Helsinki. Currently he works for a private adult education and training company.

Muhammed has written and translated literature into Kurdish since 1995 when he was 15 years old. He has written and published three books and translated 15 books, mainly from English and Arabic. He has also published a book in Finnish *Yhtä erilaiset* ("Equally Different", Helsinki 2011) on Muslims in the Finnish society in addition to several articles in books with other writers as well as dozens of columns in various Finnish media.

Besides literature, he has been involved in several linguistic and lexicographical projects. In addition to his daily work, he is currently co-working with on a Finnish-Kurdish dictionary for the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotus).³⁷

37 One-third of the dictionary is already available online: <http://kaino.kotus.fi/kurmandzi/>

Appendix 1:

Questionnaire in English

INTRODUCTION

Hello,

My name is Husein Muhammed and I am conducting a survey on the Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries. The survey is ordered by Culture for All, a state-funded organization that promotes accessibility and inclusion in the field of culture. The survey is part of the project Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic Countries and it is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The aim of this survey is to find out, what kind of Kurdish literature is written, translated, published and/or distributed in the Nordic countries. The survey also aims at clarifying in what conditions Kurdish writers live in the Nordic countries, how they reach their readers, what kind of interaction they have with other (Kurdish or non-Kurdish) writers in their current country of residence etc.

The questionnaire will be used as part of information gathering for a report on the conditions of the Kurdish literature in the Nordic countries. The report will also make policy recommendations for cultural foundations in the Nordic countries on how to support and promote Kurdish literature.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Best wishes
Husein Muhammed
Email: XXXXXXXXXX
Phone XXXXXXXXXX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KURDISH WRITERS, TRANSLATORS, PUBLISHERS, LIBRARIES, CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS ETC. IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name, language/dialect, age, gender, Nordic country of residence (since when), country of origin
- if cited, the interviewee will be asked separately

YOUR ROLE IN THE KURDISH LITERATURE

- 1) How do you participate in promoting Kurdish literature? (For example, by writing, translating, publishing, editing, funding, distributing, purchasing?)
- 2) What kind of literature do you write, translate, publish, edit, fund, distribute, purchase? (For example, fiction or nonfiction, novels, short stories, poems, children's books, teaching books, plays, journals, newspapers, comics, blogs, audiobooks, videos etc.)
- 3) How long have you been involved in the Kurdish literature by, for example, writing, translating, publishing, distributing and/or purchasing it?
- 4) Where do you publish or where your books published? (For example, in Kurdish areas, in Nordic countries, in other European countries; as printed books, on the Internet, as audiobooks.)
- 5) How do you fund your writing (or publishing, editing, distribution, purchase) of Kurdish literature?
- 6) Do you write (or publish, edit, fund, distribute, purchase) only in Kurdish or in other languages as well?

WRITER'S DAILY WORKING LIFE (please skip if you are not a writer or translator of Kurdish. Jump to questions under the heading "Future and ideas for development")

- 7) Where and in what circumstances do work with Kurdish literature (for example write, publish, edit, fund, distribute, purchase) Kurdish literature? (For example, at home, as part of an organization, funded by an organization etc.)
- 8) Which Nordic country do you live in (or operate from) and which part of Kurdistan you are originally from? Since when have you settled in a Nordic country?
- 9) Do you live in more than one country?
- 10) Do you work (write, translate, publish etc.) alone or

as a group/team?

- 11) What kind of interaction do you have with other others involved in the Kurdish literature?

FUTURE AND IDEAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 12) What are the most difficult challenges in writing (or publishing, editing, distribution, purchase) of Kurdish literature? Are there currently more or less challenges than a decade ago? How do you foresee challenges in the 2020th?
- 13) How could the Kurdish literature be promoted? (For example, writing, publishing, distributing, and attracting readers of Kurdish literature?)
- 14) Are there some success stories that you think would be useful to repeat or distribute?
- 15) Is there anything else you wish to say?

Please send your answers to
[email address]

Appendix 2:

Questionnaire in Kurmanji

RAPIRSÎ BO NIVÎSKAR, WERGÊR, WEŞANGER, KITÊBXANE, DEZGEHÊN KULTÛRÎ Û HWD. YÊN KURDÎ LI WELATÊN SKANDINAVYAYÊ

PÊŞGOTIN

Silav,

Ez Husein Muhammed im û niha lêkolînekê li ser edebiyata kurdî li welatên Skandinavyayê dikim. Lêkolîn ji aliyê dezgeha Kultûr bo Hemûyan ve hatiye xwestin ku rêxistineke çandî ye û ji aliyê wezareta perwerdeyê ya Finlandayê ve tê piştgirîkirin daku beşdarîbûna di warên kultûrî de pêşve bibe. Lêkolîna me beşek ji projeya Pirzimanîti û pirrengî wek dewlemendî li meydana kultûrî – bihêzkirin û integrekirin bi rêya edebiyatê li welatên Skandinavyayê ye û alîkariya aborî ji wezareta perwerdeyê ya Finlandayê û Encumena Wezîran ya dewletên Skandinavyayê (Nordiska Ministerrådet) werdigire. Armanca vê lêkolînê ew e ku ron bike ka çi edebiyata kurdî li welatên Skandinavyayê tê nivîsîn, wergerandin, weşandin û/yan belavkirin. Lêkolîn dê herwiha hewl bide zelal bike ka rewşa nivîskarên kurd li welatên Skandinavyayê çawa ye, ew çawa xwe digihînin xwandevanan, çi têkiliya wan li gel nivîskarên din (yên kurd an ne-kurd) heye li welatê ku niha lê dijîn û hwd. Ev rapirsî dê wek beşeke berhevkirina agahiyan were bikaranîn di raporeke li ser rewşa edebiyata kurdî de li welatên Skandinavyayê. Rapor dê herwiha pêşniyazan bo dezgehên kultûrî yên welatên Skandinavyayê pêşkêş bike derbarê ku çawa bikarin alîkariya edebiyata kurdî bikin û wê pêşve bibin. Em ê bi awayekî gis_tî û bînav muamale li gel bersivên rapirsîyê bikin. Navên bersivderan di raporê de nayên belavkirin.

Ji niha ve gelek spas bo alîkariya we!

Silavên germ
Husein Muhammed
[email]
[telefon] (Finlanda)

AGAHİYÊN PAŞXANEYÎ

Nav, ziman/zarava, temen, cins, bicihbûna li

Skandinavyayê (ji kengî ve), welatê jê hatî
ROLA TE DI MEYDANA EDEBIYATA KURDÎ DE

- 1) Hûn çawa beşdarî pêşvebirina edebiyata kurdî dibin? (Bo nimûne, bi nivîsînê, wergerandinê, weşandinê, verastkirinê, finansekirinê, belavkirinê yan kirinê?)
- 2) Hûn edebiyateke çawa dinivîsin, werdigerînin, diweşînin, dikirin yan jî verast, finanse yan belav dikin? (Bo nimûne, edebiyata xeyalî yan zanistî, roman, kurteçîrokan, helbestan, kitêbên zarokan, kitêbên hînkirinê, şanoyan, kovaran, xêzikan, blogan, kitêbên dengî, vîdyoyan û hwd.)
- 3) Çend sal in ku hûn beşdarî edebiyata kurdî dibin, bo nimûne bi nivîsînê, wergerandinê, weşandinê, belavkirinê û/yan kirinê?
- 4) Hûn li kû û di çi rewşê de edebiyata kurdî dinivîsin (yan diweşînin, verast dikin, belav dikin, dikirin û hwd.)?
- 5) Hûn li kû berhemên xwe diweşînin yan ew li kû tên weşandin? (Bo nimûne, li herêmên kurdî, li welatên Skandinavyayê, li welatên din yên Ewropayê; wek kitêbên çapkirî, li ser Internetê, wek kitêbên dengî)
- 6) Hûn heqê nivîsîna (yan weşandina, verastkirina, belavkirina, kirîna) edebiyata kurdî ji kû peyda dikin?

JIYANA ROJANE YA NIVÎSKARÎ/WERGÊRÎ (Bêzêmet, xwe di ser vê beşê re biavêjin eger hûn ne nivîskar yan wergêrek kurd bin. Herin beşa bi sernavê “Pêşeroj û raman bo pêşxistinê”)

- 7) Gelo hûn tenê bi kurdî yan herwiha bi zimanên din jî dinivîsin (yan diweşînin, dikirin yan jî verast, finanse, belav dikin)?
- 8) Hûn li kîjan welatê Skandinavyayê dijîn (yan dixebitin) û hûn ji kîjan parçeya Kurdistanê ne? Kengî hûn li welatekî Skandinavyayê bi cih bûne?
- 9) Gelo hûn li yek an çend welatan dijîn?

- 10) Gelo hûn bi tenê dixebitin yan wek komekê/
tîmekê (dinivîsin, werdigerînin, diweşînin û hwd.)?
- 11) Têkiliyên we li gel nivîskarên din û/yan
xwandevanên we bi çi awayî ne?

PÊŞEROJ Î RAMAN BO PÊŞXISTINÊ

- 12) Gelo astengên herî dijwar li ber nivîsîna
(weşandina, kirîna, verastkirina, belavkirina)
edebiyata kurdî çî ne? Gelo niha bi berhevdana li
gel deh sal pêştir kêmtir an zêdetir asteng hene?
Hûn bawer dikin ku rewş dê di salên 2020an de
çawan be?
- 13) Gelo edebiyata kurdî çawa dikare were pêşvebirin?
(Bo nimûne, bi nivîsînê, weşandinê, belavkirinê,
balkişandina xwandekaran bo edebiyata kurdî?)
- 14) Gelo hinek tecrûbeyên biserketî hene ku hûn
bawer dikin baş e bîrê dubarekirin an belavkirin?
- 15) Gelo tiştekî din heye ku hûn dixwazin bibêjin?

Ji kerema xwe, bersivên xwe bişînin
[email]

Appendix 4: Questionnaire in Finnish

Hei,

Nimeni on Husein Muhammed ja teen kyselyä, joka liittyy selvitykseen kurdinkielisestä kirjallisuudesta Pohjoismaissa. Selvityksen tilaaja on Kulttuuria kaikille -palvelu, organisaatio, joka edistää saavutettavuutta ja yhdenvertaisuutta kulttuurin kentällä. Selvitys on osa projektia Monikielisyys ja moninaisuus kulttuurikentän voimavarana, jota rahoittaa Pohjoismainen ministerineuvosto.

Kyselyn tarkoituksena on saada selville, millaista kurdinkielistä kirjallisuutta Pohjoismaissa kirjoitetaan, käännetään, julkaistaan tai levitetään. Kysely pyrkii myös selvittämään, millaisissa olosuhteissa kurdinkieliset kirjailijat ja kirjallisuuden kääntäjät työskentelevät Pohjoismaissa, miten he tavoittavat lukijoitaan ja missä määrin he ovat tekemisissä muiden (kurdinkielisten tai ei-kurdinkielisten) kirjailijoiden kanssa asuinmaassaan.

Kysely on osa tiedonkeruuta kurdinkielistä kirjallisuuskenttää koskevaa selvitystä varten. Selvityksen pohjalta tehdään myös toimenpidesuosituksia Pohjoismaiden kulttuuriorganisaatioille kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden edistämiseksi. Lisäksi käsitellään kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden tarpeita lasten ja aikuisten näkökulmasta sekä käännöstarpeita kurdikielille ja kurdinkielistä.

Jos vastauksia siteerataan suoraan, lupaa kysytään erikseen vastauksen antaneelta henkilöltä. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään anonymisti ja luottamuksellisesti.

Kiitokset avustasi etukäteen!

Jos haluat lisätietoja, älä epäröi ottaa yhteyttä minuun.

Parhain terveisin,
Husein Muhammed
[sähköpostiosoite]
[puhelinnumero]

**KYSELY KURDINKIELISILLE KIRJAILIJOILLE,
KÄÄNTÄJILLE, KUSTANTAJILLE / JULKAISIJOILLE,
KIRJAILIJOILLE JA KIRJALLISUUTTA TUKEVILLE
ORGANISAATIOILLE POHJOISMAISSA**

TAUSTATIEDOT

Nimi
kieli/ murre
ikä
sukupuoli
asuinmaa Pohjoismaissa (mistä lähtien?)

ROOLISI KURDIKIRJALLISUUDEN KENTÄLLÄ

- 1) Miten osallistut kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden edistämiseen? (Esim. kirjoittaminen, kääntäminen, julkaiseminen, toimittaminen, rahoittaminen, jakelu tai ostaminen?)
- 2) Millaista kirjallisuutta kirjoitat / käännyt / julkaiset / toimitat/ rahoitat/ välität/ ostat? (Esim. kaunokirjallisuus, tietokirjallisuus, romaanit, novellit, runot, lastenkirjat, oppimateriaalit, näytelmät, aikakauslehdet, sanomalehdet, sarjakuvat, blogit, äänikirjat, videot jne.)
- 3) Kuinka pitkään olet ollut tekemisissä kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden kanssa? (Esim. kirjoittaminen, kääntäminen, julkaiseminen, toimittaminen, rahoittaminen, jakelu tai ostaminen?)
- 4) Missä julkaiset kirjasi tai missä ne julkaistaan? (Esim. kurdialueilla, Pohjoismaissa, muualla Euroopassa; painettuina kirjoina, verkossa, äänikirjoina.)
- 5) Miten rahoitat kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden kirjoittamisesi (tai julkaisemisen, toimittamisen, jakelun, ostamisen)
- 6) Kirjoitatko (julkaisetko/ toimitatko/ rahoitatko/ jakeletko/ ostatko) vain kurdinkielistä kirjallisuutta vai myös muilla kielillä kirjoitettua kirjallisuutta?

KIRJAILIJAN TAI KÄÄNTÄJÄN ARKI

(ohita tämä kysymys, jos et ole kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden kirjoittaja tai kääntäjä. Siirry kysymyksiin "TULEVAISUUS JA IDEOITA KENTÄN KEHITTÄMISEKSI" -otsikon alle.)

- 7) Missä ja minkälaisissa olosuhteissa työskentelet

kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden parissa
(kirjoittaminen, kääntäminen, toimittaminen
jne.)? Esimerkiksi kotona, organisaation tiloissa,
organisaation rahoittamana jne.)

- 8) Missä Pohjoismaassa asut tai mistä Pohjoismaasta käsin toimit? Ja mistä osasta Kurdistania olet alun perin kotoisin? Mistä asti olet asunut jossakin Pohjoismaassa?
- 9) Asutko useammassa kuin yhdessä maassa?
- 10) Työskenteletkö (kirjoittaminen, kääntäminen, julkaiseminen jne.) yksin vai ryhmässä?
- 11) Millä tavoin olet tekemisissä muiden kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden kentällä toimivien ihmisten kanssa?

TULEVAISUUS JA IDEOITA KENTÄN KEHITTÄMISEKSI

- 12) Mitkä ovat vaikeimmat haasteet kurdinkielisen kirjallisuuden kirjoittamisessa (tai toimittamisessa/ julkaisemisessa/ jakelussa/ hankkimisessa)? Onko haasteita nyt enemmän vai vähemmän kuin kymmenen vuotta sitten? Millaisia haasteita hahmotat 2020-luvulle?
- 13) Miten kurdinkielistä kirjallisuutta voisi edistää?
- 14) Onko tiedossasi menestystarinoita, joita olisi hyödyllistä toistaa tai jakaa?
- 15) Onko jotakin muuta, mitä haluat sanoa?

Kiitos vastauksistasi! Pyydämme, että lähetät ne osoitteeseen:
[sähköpostiosoite]

Appendix 5: Questionnaire in Swedish

INLEDNING

Hej,

Mitt namn är Husein Muhammed och jag ska utföra en utredning över litteratur skriven på kurdiska språk i Norden. Utredningens beställare är Kultur för alla, en statligt finansierad organisation som främjar tillgänglighet och inklusion på konst- och kulturfältet i Finland. Utredningen är en del av projektet Multilingualism and diversity as a resource in the cultural field – employment and integration through literature in the Nordic Countries, som finansieras av Nordiska ministerrådet.

Syftet med utredningen är att undersöka vilken slags kurdisk litteratur skrivs, översätts, utges och/eller distribueras i Norden. Målet är också att utreda bl.a. under vilka slags villkor kurdiskspråkiga författare och översättare verkar under i Norden, hur de når sina läsare samt vilka slags kontakter de har med andra (kurdiska eller icke-kurdiska) författare i det land de bor i. En viktig del av rapporten är även att kartlägga behovet av litteratur för barn och vuxna skriven på eller översatt till kurdiska språk.

Frågeformuläret är en del av den bakgrundsinformation som samlas in för att sammanställa rapporten om den kurdiskspråkiga litteraturens situation i Norden. I rapporten inkluderas även rekommendationer för kulturaktörer och kulturadministratörer i Norden om hur kurdiskspråkig litteratur kan stödas och främjas.

Alla svar kommer att behandlas anonymt och konfidentiellt. Om skribenten skulle vilja citera något svar kommer den citerade personen att tillfrågas.

Tack på förhand för din hjälp!

Kontakta mig gärna om du har några frågor.

Med vänlig hälsning,
Husein Muhammed
[Emailaddress]
[Telefonnummer]

FRÅGEFORMULÄR FÖR KURDISKSPRÅKIGA

FÖRFATTARE, ÖVERSÄTTARE, FÖRLÄGGARE, BIBLIOTEK, KULTURORGANISATIONER OSV I DE NORDISKA LÄNDERNA

> om svar citeras görs det anonymt och endast efter samtycke

BAKGRUNDSINFORMATION

Namn, språk/dialekt, ålder, kön, nordiskt
bosättningsland (sedan när), ursprungsland

DIN ROLL PÅ DET KURDISKA LITTERÄRA FÄLTET

- 1) Hur deltar du i främjandet av kurdisk litteratur?
(T.ex. genom att skriva, översätta, ge ut, redigera, finansiera, distribuera, köpa in?)
- 2) Vilken slags litteratur skriver, översätter eller
redigerar du, ger du ut, finansierar, distribuerar
eller köper du upp? (T.ex. skönlitteratur eller
facklitteratur, romaner, noveller, poesi, dramatik,
serier, barnlitteratur, pedagogisk litteratur, bloggar,
audioböcker, videor etc.)
- 3) Hur länge har du arbetat med litteratur på kurdiska
språk, t.ex. med att skriva, översätta, ge ut,
distribuera och/eller köpa upp kurdisk litteratur?
- 4) Var ger du ut dina böcker eller var är de utgivna?
(T.ex. på kurdiska områden, i nordiska länder, i
andra europeiska länder och i form av t.ex. tryckta
böcker, på internet, som audioböcker)
- 5) Hur finansierar du ditt skrivande (eller
förläggandet, redigeringen, distribueringen,
inköpet) av litteratur på kurdiska språk?
- 6) Skriver du (eller förlägger, redigerar, distribuerar,

köper in) litteratur enbart på kurdiska språk eller

eller spridas?

även på andra språk?

15) Annat som du skulle vilja tillägga?

FÖRFATTARENS/ ÖVERSÄTTARENS VARDAG

(vänligen hoppa över om du inte är författare, skribent eller översättare och fortsätt till rubriken "Framtiden och idéer för en utveckling av fältet")

Vänligen skicka dina svar till:
[Emailadress]

7) Var och under vilka omständigheter arbetar du

med litteratur på kurdiska språk? (T.ex. hemma,

som en del av en organisation, på arvodesbasis, på stipendier eller finansierad av en organisation)

8) I vilket nordiskt land bor du i (eller verkar du

från) och vilken del av Kurdistan kommer du

ursprungligen från? Sedan när har du varit bosatt i ett nordiskt land?

9) Bor du i flera än ett land?

10) Arbetar du ensam (skriver, översätter, ger ut) eller

som en del av ett team?

11) Hur samverkar du med andra personer/aktörer på

det kurdiska litterära fältet?

FRAMTIDEN OCH IDÉER FÖR EN UTVECKLING AV FÄLTET

12) Vilka är de svåraste utmaningarna för en aktör

på det kurdiska litterära fältet i Norden (t.ex. som

författare, förläggare, redaktör, distributör eller uppköpare)? Är utmaningarna nu fler eller färre än de var för ett decennium sedan? Vilka tror du att är utmaningarna på 2020-talet?

13) Hur skulle den kurdiska litteraturen i Norden

kunna synliggöras bättre?

14) Finns det några goda exempel,

framgångsberättelser, som kunde upprepas och/



Kulttuuria kaikille
Kultur för alla
Culture for All



Nordic Council
of Ministers

#norden2020

Norden 2020

- Vad händer med välfärden i Norden?