Summarising Impact Assessment Report on "Digital in Sweden"

Background

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden at Malmö University and Telia Company have written this summarising impact assessment report together. It is a result of a process where Forum for Social Innovation, after developing a tool and guide for how to work with impact assessments in the field of digital inclusion, has tested the tool together with Telia Company on Telia Sweden's digital inclusion initiative "Digital in Sweden". This report shares the identified impact and some recommendations.

Why "Digital in Sweden" is needed

In 2022 Telia Sweden launched a new initiative "Digital in Sweden", in collaboration with the County Administrative Board Stockholm (Länsstyrelsen Stockholm). The initiative aims to create inspiration and increased knowledge in a safe environment about basic digital community services among newly arrived immigrants. The program is simultaneously interpreted into various languages to enable participants to benefit from the trainings.

The challenge that "Digital in Sweden" was created to deal with is that **society lacks effective ways to support newly arrived in their digital inclusion in Sweden**. Factors identified by Telia as reasons for this situation are the following. Firstly, the fact that Sweden is a highly digitalized society leads to the need for inhabitants to be very digital. Secondly, the support arranged for people with low digital skills is often given on digital platforms, which may not be reached by persons with low digital skills, especially when language is a barrier. Thirdly, the support for newly arrived to become more digital is seldom synchronized between different actors working towards the same end goal.

This leads to, for example, a less efficient introduction to Sweden for the newly arrived, potentially putting them at risk of digital exclusion. It may also lead to the need to offer non-digital support services as a complement to digital services, resulting in higher costs for various societal actors. Also, digital services may not be used to their full extent, with people losing out on all the benefits of these services.

Each event within Digital in Sweden is carried out together with the municipalities that have chosen to host one or more events. The municipalities decide when and where the events should take place and are responsible to invite the newly arrived, as they often are already in contact with them. Telia's responsibility is to project manage, develop the material that is being used at the events, and invite the right partners, for example, the company Digital Tolk, who brings interpreters in all relevant languages and companies and organisations that provide relevant services, like banks and public authorities.

Photo: Digital in Sweden

Goals for "Digital in Sweden"

The initiative's main goal, as identified during the impact assessment process, is **to help increase the municipalities' capacity in supporting newly arrived with their digital inclusion in Sweden**. The sub-goals identified as necessary to attain in order to reach the impact are:

- For the newly arrived:
  - o Increased knowledge of Sweden's digital services and tools among participating newly arrived.
  - o Increased interest in Sweden's digital services and tools among participating newly arrived.
  - o The newly arrived feel welcome, and safe, and enjoyed participating in the events.
  - o The participants experience that they got help and support on digital services.
- For the municipalities:
  - o The municipalities have a new methodology to support newly arrived in digital inclusion.
  - o The municipalities have the experience/capacity to gather all the actors locally that can support the newly arrived.
  - o Increased local cooperation on the digital inclusion of newly arrived in Sweden between municipalities and other local actors.

Method for data-gathering

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden attended two Digital in Sweden events during the Spring of 2023 with one data-gatherer per occasion. At these events, there were a total of 65 participants out of which around 51% (33 individuals) answered the questions. After consulting with the initiative's project manager, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden created a type of questionnaire that didn't demand the ability of writing but used symbols. This questionnaire was given physically on paper, to the participants for each table/language group where there either was a personal interpreter or an interpreter via the phone. This questionnaire was complemented by a discussion together with the participants, based on the help of the interpreters, to gather their thoughts on their participation at the "Digital in Sweden". The answers to these questions were written down by the data-gatherer in a notebook. A questionnaire was also sent to the municipalities hosting the events via email, a few days after the respective events.

Photo: Digital in Sweden

Results

The impact identified by the assessment will here be presented based on the goals for the initiative and based on which target group the goal refers to. Summarising all findings, it is clear that the initiative has a positive impact by increasing the municipalities' capacity in supporting newly arrived with their digital inclusion in Sweden.

Experiences of the newly arrived

The newly arrived felt welcome, and safe, and enjoyed participating in the events

100% of the interviewed participants enjoyed participating. When asked about this in the meeting, many replied with emphasis that they felt very welcome and enjoyed participating. This is a very clear result illustrated further in the quotes below.

Photo: Digital in Sweden

"Everyone is really nice here, I feel welcome."
– Quote from one of the participants.

"There is a lot that I like. I like how you meet people, like caseworkers that I know from before and classmates from SFI [Swedish for immigrants]. I like that you invited all the newly arrived here to learn. The gathering, everyone that's here. A nice initiative – everyone supports each other."
– Quote from one of the participants.

"What I liked about this event is to see the people here, everyone learning. We appreciate this initiative. We need to come and receive the training. It was nice speaking the same language."
– Quote from one of the participants.

Increased knowledge of Sweden's digital services and tools among participating newly arrived

The result, from the two events, is that 73% i.e. 24 of the 33 participants, clearly increased their knowledge. This is a clear majority showcasing that the initiative brings about an increased knowledge for participating newly arrived of Sweden's digital services and tools. Out of the other replies, which mainly stated that the knowledge was about the same, some still showcased a slight increase in knowledge. It was obvious that the most newly arrived or individuals with the least previous knowledge increased their knowledge the most.

"I'm new in this country (came last year), and it's a lot to learn – especially the language. E.g., 1177 – this information was good to receive. To receive advice. To learn how to save documents and pictures on the phone. Because one might forget/lose one's credentials so it's important to learn how to find these again. To find out about digital opportunities that exist."
– Quote from one of the participants.

"I have already been here for 3 years, and this information should have come earlier. It's a good summary of everything you need."
– Quote from one of the participants.

"It will get better for me when I know more about this stuff. I have learnt about Försäkringskassan (the Swedish public insurance authority), The Swedish Tax Agency, and Telia. I learnt about BankID and how to protect myself from fraud online/digitally. I have learnt about 1177, it can be difficult if you don't receive any help."
– Quote from one of the participants.

Photo: Digital in Sweden

Increased interest in Sweden's digital services and tools among participating newly arrived
The result, from the two events, is that 82% i.e. 27 of the 33 participants, now definitely want to try out digital services and tools in Sweden. The other 18% stated that they perhaps want to try out digital services and tools in Sweden. In summary, the initiative increased the participants' interest in Sweden's digital tools and services.

"I wasn't familiar with the Swedish system, it's good to learn. Having this under control, I'm interested in learning more stuff."
– Quote from one of the participants.

The participants experienced that they got help and support on digital services
100% of the 33 participants stated that they recommend other newly arrived to attend digital inclusion events.

"It's better to receive help this way from people than just reading the information."
– Quote from one of the participants.

Experiences of the municipalities

The sub-goals of the initiative identified for the municipalities were that the municipalities would have **a new methodology to support newly arrived in digital inclusion** and **the experience/capacity to gather all the actors locally that can support the newly arrived**, as well as **increased local cooperation on the digital inclusion of newly arrived in Sweden between municipalities and local actors**. The responses from the two municipalities were generally positive, confirming the identified goals and reflecting on some areas for improvements when planning further on this. It was however clear that the questionnaire was sent too soon after the events and the respondents had not had time to discuss internally and plan for the next steps.

Without their own survey among the participants, it was hard for the municipalities to know if a majority of the participants increased their knowledge. However, generally, the municipalities felt that the event itself was fit for its purpose. The municipalities thought that many participants gained new knowledge and highlighted that there was a different level of knowledge among the participants, pointing out that those that were beginners gained more knowledge.

"It was a fun happening, the newly arrived were seen and received material in their own language"
– Quote from one of the municipalities.

"Pros: […] It was a good way for the newly arrived to meet the company Digital Tolk. There were interpreters in several languages. Both municipal units – Vuxenenheten and Ekonomiskt bistånd – were there. The event was adapted for different levels so that the clients could attain the information […]. Cons: The time for the event since it was held during pick-up time from childcare."
– Quote from one of the municipalities.

When it comes to recommending this initiative to other municipalities, the feedback was generally positive. It was highlighted that the consideration may be related to the efforts already present in the specific municipality, as this should be seen as a complementary methodology for the digital inclusion of newly arrived.

"Each municipality must weigh it against the efforts already given."
– Quote from one of the municipalities.

The municipalities responded that their participation in the initiative increased the collaboration between the local actors on the digital inclusion of newly arrived.

"Yes, we have strengthened the relationship with Statens Servicecenter and BankID."
– Quote from one of the municipalities.

"It was good for all actors to meet in this way."
– Quote from one of the municipalities.

Reflections

Photo: Digital in Sweden

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden tested the impact assessment tool that was developed for Telia, on the "Digital in Sweden" initiative. The aim was to describe the impact of the initiative and to test the usability of the tool in assessing digital inclusion initiatives. To summarize, it was very clear that the initiative had resulted in increased knowledge and interest in the digital solutions available in Sweden among the participating newly arrived. The assessment also showed increased capacity among participating municipalities to gather local actors that can support the digital inclusion of the newly arrived.

The results should be seen in the light of being based on only two events with 33 participants interviewed and two municipalities. It is recommended to continue assessing the "Digital in Sweden" initiative in order to strengthen the results described in this report and to see the more long-term impact.

Below are some reflections and suggestions from Forum for Social Innovation Sweden on the continued work with "Digital in Sweden", based on the results from this first assessment.

Recommendations for further development:

- **Target group.** The organisers could consider how to make sure that the intended target group is the one attending. It was obvious that the most newly arrived with the need for interpreters benefitted the most from the event, and it seems the focus should be to invite them. For newly arrived that either has more knowledge of digital tools and services or don't yet have a bank account and/or mobile BankID, other initiatives are more relevant.
- **Continuation**. The participants were very clear in their request that these kinds of events should take place continuously, for further learning. The requests ranged from every third month to every other week. This is something that the organisers could discuss and evaluate if there are further collaboration opportunities going forward based on these requests.
- **Availability of materials**. To support the participants' continued learning, it would be worthwhile to develop physical material that can be handed out to the participants, in their own languages. This material could, just like the cards used during the events in order to stimulate discussions, pinpoint important services to look up. This material could e.g., link forward to the new website that Telia is currently developing with 16 sub-pages, one for each language, where all the materials and videos are available for free, for newly arrived and the municipalities.

The continued work with assessing "Digital in Sweden"

As this summarising impact report is a result of a development process, where Forum for Social Innovation developed a tool and guide for how to work with impact assessments in the field of digital inclusion, and then tested the tool together with Telia Company on Telia Sweden's digital inclusion initiative "Digital in Sweden", some notes on the assessment as such are relevant.

It is recommended to continue assessing the "Digital in Sweden" initiative. Based on the learnings from this assessment, the following steps are recommended:

- Gather data from the same municipalities again later on, regarding the same questions, when they have seen the development for the participants.
- In order to increase the response rate from the participants a digital survey could be developed that is translated into all the languages which can be used by the participants at the events. The participants can be asked to fill in the questionnaire at the end of their participation and this needs to be short and easy to use.
- Gather data not only by gender but also by language table, that can be used in future development of the concept. The current data didn't reflect differing needs between the participants based on gender, but it can be due to the small selection of respondents, so more data might be relevant.
- The approach and attitudes concerning the welcoming climate in the events used by Telia staff appear to be very central to the outcome of the initiative and could be described as a success factor. It is reflected in the positive scores stating that participants feel welcome. These approaches could, if Telia wishes, be described further by the staff, perhaps with the support of external reflections. This could serve to further describe the methodology and approaches that are central to Telia initiatives. It is also something that could contribute to maintaining the quality of Telia events and can be followed up as part of the Telia key approach.