

Annual Report 2021

Björkåfrihet



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1 DIRECTORS' REPORT

The pandemic continued to affect both the wider world and our association in 2021. Our solidarity work has been affected by the need to reduce our aid levels, and also by the fact that we and our partners have had to cancel activities. Repressive states have seized the opportunity to further reduce the democratic space for civil society, and this has been very evident in the occupied countries in which we operate. Several of our partners in Palestine and Western Sahara have faced increased repression by the occupying powers who have tried to silence their critical voices.

The first months of the year were marked by the second wave of contagion, which again affected our second-hand business, although not to such devastating effect as last year. As sales began to recover in the spring, we faced a further challenge when the shop in Borås was totally destroyed by a major conflagration. We decided to move forward in the autumn and opened two new shops, one in Burlöv in Skåne and one in Borås, which replaced the one we had to close down. As restrictions and the spread of disease eased in the autumn, the two new shops got off to a good start and we saw generally good sales in the last few months of the year.

The association's ability to deal with crises has really been put to the test during the year. With great determination, the Board, management and staff have worked together to overcome the obstacles that have stood in our way. The need for our solidarity and sustainability work gives us the strength to fight on!

1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Björkåfrihet is a not-for-profit association whose corporate ID number is 829500-1112. **Björkåfrihet's registered office is in Gothenburg.**

Vision and object

Björkåfrihet is an autonomous, active organisation that works determinedly and independently to end deprivation and the causes of deprivation within a socialist tradition. Deprivation and its causes are complex but are not the consequence of any laws of nature. They are structural and financial, have developed historically and express themselves in political distribution of power and resources, a situation that cannot be resolved through charity. The object of the association is to work to eradicate these problems by focusing on international solidarity, sustainable development and social responsibility in the labour market.

Significant partnerships

Since 2018, Björkåfrihet has been a completely independent organisation. Before this, it was part of the international Emmaus movement, under its previous name, Emmaus Björkå. However, it has formed many different partnerships and important relationships.

Björkåfrihet is a member of ForumCiv, which brings together Swedish civil society organisations working with aid funding.

In Sweden, Björkåfrihet works with over 40 municipalities to undertake daily collections of items donated for re-use. The organisation also works in partnership with the municipalities and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service to employ people experiencing various forms of hardship and to enable them to work to promote sustainability and solidarity.

Björkåfrihet is involved in several research projects looking at reuse and recycling. The organisation also works with many other public, ideologically-driven and private players on re-use and how it can be increased in the community. Alongside similar parties in the Ideell Second Hand network, Björkåfrihet seeks to establish a positive dialogue with political decision-makers and authorities around the role of voluntary sector second-hand organisations in society.

1.2 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR AND SINCE THE END OF THE YEAR

Important changes in the organisation

In May, the building where our shop in Borås was situated burned down. The fire started in another part of the building but spread to our shop, which was totally destroyed. December saw the opening of a new shop in Borås, also in Knalleland.

In September, a new shop was opened at the Burlöv Center in Skåne.

In May, Ann-Jeanet Jörgensen was recruited as our new Financial Director. Jerry Larusson took up his position as Operational Director in September, and Ulrica Tholander Edvardsson took up the position of Sales Director in December. Four new heads of unit also began work with us during the year.

Important events in the external environment

Both Sweden and the rest of the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, **which, in addition to taking millions of people's lives, has led to many people losing their jobs and livelihoods.** An estimated 150 million more people are living in extreme poverty since the pandemic began. The pandemic has also highlighted the injustices in our world, **where poor people's access to vaccines is given lower priority as rich countries snatch vaccines for their populations.** This became clear when Israel, one of the countries at the cutting edge in respect of vaccination, refused vaccines to the Palestinian population in occupied territories.

Climate change, the disaster that threatens our planet to an even more crucial extent than the COVID-19 pandemic, is still not being taken seriously by the people in power who have control over change. At the same time, the mobilisation of the environmental movement and all the forces demanding change is continuing.

In the shadow of the pandemic, the occupying powers, Israel and Morocco, have stepped up repression against forces fighting the occupations. One of our partner organisations, **the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC), along with five other established and well-known human rights organisations,** was placed on the terror list by Israel during the year. This move was condemned by the UN and others, but is a way for Israel to try to silence Palestinian civil society. In occupied Western Sahara, too, there was an increase in repression of activists **working against Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara.**

In Sweden, the debate on migration has intensified still further and political parties seem to be competing to see who can introduce the strictest migration policy. The people in question, who have fled war and oppression and have the right to seek asylum under the Geneva Convention, are rapidly being dehumanised. This goes hand in hand with the normalisation of racism that characterises our age. The solutions to our problems in society are increasingly being presented as tougher measures and stricter migration policies, instead of investments in welfare and basic human rights.

Significant events since the end of the financial year

Since the end of the financial year, the pandemic has continued to have an impact on the organisation. However, the actions we took in 2021 have meant the situation is stable and we are prepared for further restrictions and impact on sales.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March 2022 has affected the world in many ways. As an organisation that has worked against occupation for many decades, we welcome the international solidarity shown to the people of Ukraine and will continue to work to ensure that it extends to the target groups we work with who have suffered and are suffering the same kind of abuse. Björkåfrihet will not be rearranging its work, but it may provide support to Ukrainian refugees coming to Sweden. Otherwise, the association may be affected by price increases for diesel and electricity, for example.

1.3 PROMOTION OF OUR OBJECT DURING THE YEAR

1.3.1 Solidarity projects and programmes

Björkåfrihet's international solidarity projects involve partnerships with local organisations and groups of activists. A partnership is initiated by drawing up an agreement that is signed by both parties. The agreement determines how funds are to be used, anti-corruption procedures, requirements for financial and narrative reporting, etc. and has a project plan, target matrix and budget appended.

During the course of a partnership project, **Björkåfrihet's employees are in constant contact** with its partner organisations by means of monitoring visits, video meetings, email and telephone. However, significantly fewer follow-up visits than planned could be carried out on account of the pandemic. This follow-up, combined with regular reporting and external reviews, enables us to monitor how far we are meeting our objectives and the effects of our projects. We can also see how we have managed our finances, whether the budget has been adhered to and whether we have undertaken the activities planned. All projects supported with project funding must meet performance targets.

The effects of project support to be reported on relate solely to the support provided by Björkåfrihet, either self-financed or in the form of earmarked donations and support from other organisations. Effects resulting from other funding available to the recipient are not included in the reports.

Björkåfrihet's efforts are directed at civil society with a view to strengthening people's ability to organise and mobilise themselves so that they can claim their rights and fight injustice, and also to supporting humanitarian projects. Over the years we have worked in partnership with like-minded organisations in Palestine, Lebanon, Western Sahara, Algeria and Sweden.

Björkåfrihet's international anti-occupation programme is called *Seeds of Independence*. There are two sub-programmes within this framework: *Seeds of Independence – Mobilisation and Advocacy* and *Seeds of Independence – Health Care and Rehabilitation*.

In Sweden, Björkåfrihet partners with organisations that work with refugees and undocumented migrants.

Financial overview of solidarity projects in 2021

Area	SEK 000
Support in Sweden	1,080
Support in Palestine/Lebanon	3,867
Support in Western Sahara/Algeria	287

The world: Seeds of Independence – Mobilisation and Advocacy

2021 was the first year of the second cycle of the *Seeds of Independence* programme, which will run until the end of 2022. The aim of this programme is to help bring about a progressive and sustainable civil society in Palestine and Western Sahara, which in turn contributes to the fight against occupation and for the right to self-determination. In 2021, seven organisations were involved in the programme, five Palestinian and two Sahrawi, that between them work in five different regions: the West Bank, Gaza, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, occupied Western Sahara and Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria. Each organisation runs its own project within the programme, and Björkåfrihet is responsible for coordination and joint activities.

Human Call Association

Human Call Association (HCA) is one of the bigger Palestinian grassroots organisations in Lebanon. Their project within the programme focuses on leadership training for young people from various Palestinian civil society organisations across the country. HCA has also implemented a number of information initiatives in 2021, on themes such as health, the environment and human rights for people in the refugee camps.

Nuwat Social Solidarity Centre

Nuwat Social Solidarity Centre (Nuwat) is an organisation with its head office at the Ein el-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. As part of this programme, they are **running a project that focuses on strengthening young people's capacity to influence their situation and claim their rights as Palestinian refugees. In 2021, Nuwat's activities** have included training young people on international law and how to use social media for conducting advocacy work. A network of course participants from various Palestinian refugee camps has been created in order to facilitate synchronised advocacy campaigns.

Union of Palestinian Women's Committees

The Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC) has its main office in Ramallah in the West Bank but has local offices throughout the West Bank and Gaza. It is a broad-based women's organisation whose goal is to ensure the inclusion of women in all aspects of society. As part of the programme, they are running a project that focuses on strengthening their own organisational capacity, mobilising Palestinian women to claim their political, social and economic rights and conducting advocacy work. In 2021, UPWC volunteers and employees have enhanced their skills in photography and producing video for social media. They have launched advocacy campaigns to draw attention to the situation of Palestinian women prisoners in Israeli jails, and against domestic violence against women. UPWC has also been successful in increasing the number of members of the organisation.

Badil

In 2020, Björkåfrihet embarked on a partnership with Badil, a resource centre for Palestinian refugees and people who have been internally displaced. They are based in the West Bank but focus on Palestinian refugees throughout the world. They generate knowledge of the situation of refugees both currently and in the past. They use this knowledge to advocate for refugees' rights, including the right of return and the right to

self-determination. In 2021, the cooperation between Björkåfrihet and Badil was extended to form a two-year project between 2021 and 2022, focusing on workshops for young people on identity and human rights.

Palestine Institute of Public Diplomacy (PIPD)

In 2020, Björkåfrihet began a partnership with the Palestine Institute of Public Diplomacy (PIPD), which is a relatively new group based in Ramallah in the West Bank. They engage in advocacy work through online campaigns, and focus on the right to self-determination and the injustices of the current situation. Their material is usually in English and they target an international audience. This partnership has been extended in 2021. PIPD has produced podcasts and video-based materials during the year.

Equipe Media

Equipe Media is a media activist network in the occupied area of Western Sahara. They document and distribute information about human rights violations in occupied territory through social media and contact with politicians and journalists. Under the programme, **they are running a project that focuses on reinforcing the organisation's capacity to** reach out with its material. Work began on a new website in 2021, and Equipe Media has produced material in the form of shorts and documentaries on the situation of Sahrawis living under Moroccan occupation.

Saharawi Voice

The work of Saharawi Voice focuses on the refugee camps in Algeria. Their aim is to raise awareness of the situation in the camps and humanise the image of the refugees. They work mainly with photography and film, and the project that Björkåfrihet supported in 2021 focused on outward-facing campaigns and media workshops in the refugee camps. Saharawi Voice also focuses on situational monitoring and has corrected misinformation in the international media.

The world: Seeds of Independence – Health Care and Rehabilitation

Health care

During 2021, Björkåfrihet provided support for the Human Call Association (HCA), which runs a hospital in the Ein el-Helweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon. The hospital is the only one to be open 24 hours a day in a large camp that is often the scene of confrontations. The project funded by Björkåfrihet has helped to subsidise health care for those patients unable to pay for themselves and contributed to the **hospital's running costs**.

The Union of Health Work Committees (UHCW) runs a hospital and several clinics around Gaza. 2021 saw the completion of a project to guarantee electricity supplies to two of **the UHCW's facilities through the installation of photovoltaic systems**. Björkåfrihet has also provided funding the fitting out of a new hospital specialising in gynaecology and obstetrics. In May 2021, during the Israeli bombardment of Gaza, we also launched an additional collection campaign for the UHCW when it was designated as an emergency

hospital that worked in coordination with the Red Crescent to receive a third of the injured people from northern Gaza. The funds raised went towards emergency medical care for the injured.

Sweden: Right of asylum

Björkåfrihet's work in Sweden aims both to support vulnerable people in our own community and to shape opinion so as to eradicate the causes of poverty and oppression. Our focus is on the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, and anti-racism.

During 2021, Björkåfrihet made monthly financial contributions to several groups working on the right of asylum, i.e. Asylgruppen i Malmö (the Asylum Group in Malmö), the Ingen människa är illegal (No-one is illegal) network in Gothenburg and Rosengrenska stiftelsen (the Rosengren Foundation) in Gothenburg. These groups give financial support to undocumented migrants to cover costs of accommodation, food, transport, help with health and medical care and legal advice.

In 2021, a feasibility study began with a view to finding new partners in order to expand the work of Björkåfrihet in Sweden, focusing particularly on anti-racism and migrant rights.

1.3.2 Environment

Collection activities

During 2021, Björkåfrihet collected 2,801,235 kg of clothes, shoes, accessories and textiles. The organisation also received 1,437,291 kg of re-usable items. In total, therefore, Björkåfrihet handled 4,238,526 kg of material from collections via our own units and our partner organisations during the year. This is down 15% on 2019, the **association's best collection year to date**, and up 9.5% on 2020. As in the previous year, collection efforts in 2021 were impacted by the pandemic and the prevailing restrictions and recommendations. This affected our staffing capacity, the number of donors and visitors to our shops and export opportunities, resulting in the cancellation of the planned expansion of collection in 2021. More and more local authorities are choosing to contract out collection activities, and we have both won and lost collection contracts in our catchment areas in western and southern Sweden during the year.

West

Collection came to an end in Halmstad, Stenungsund and Alingsås in the previous year, 2020. That said, Björkåfrihet won tenders in the City of Gothenburg and the Municipality of Karlstad in 2021. Collection at our previous sites has remained stable despite a lack of staff on account of the pandemic. Establishing ourselves in Karlstad ensures we have a presence in more regions, which is strategically important as national and European textile processing is facing changes.

Operations have been established at the Frillesås and Kärna recycling centres in Kungälv in 2021, along with testing of *kerbside collection*. Establishment of these operations is expected to help bring about greater inflow in 2022.

South

During the year, our partner Sysav – which runs recycling centres in the South region – chose to manage textile streams at its three biggest recycling centres under its own auspices. This meant that Björkåfrihet operations in the South region lost 65% of their textile collection. We are very vulnerable when we have just a small number of partners. This is why 2021 has involved a search for new networks and partners to complement existing ones. We are expecting to see the impact of this work in 2022. Collection of recyclable items remained at the same level as in 2019. Thus the South region has recovered from its loss in 2020. Attempts have been made to establish new partnerships and collection streams in this fraction during the year, and this work is expected to pay off in 2022.

Collections through partnerships with municipalities

Our municipal partners have been hugely affected by the pandemic, as their operations take place within the framework of daily activities. That said, a number of units were able to approach pre-pandemic levels of activity in 2021, although it has been difficult to maintain stable collections. Collection of textiles in cooperation with the municipal partners was 14% down on 2019 and 18% down on 2020.

Björkåfrihet's existing cooperation with Förpackning- och Tidningsinsamlingen (FTI) enabled us to sign a contract for collection at recycling stations in Laholm in 2021, which will be managed by our municipal partner there.

Environment-related advocacy work

When permitted by the infection situation, Björkåfrihet has invited people to turn up at the Aröd facility and demonstrated its activities there, with a view to influencing and creating more initiatives for sustainable textile management throughout Sweden.

Björkåfrihet has Sweden's only fully professional textile sorting facility, so it is important to take responsibility and demonstrate the opportunities presented by a national textile value chain. The impact of Swedish consumption is also reduced by influencing major textile players to add value in domestic management, as surplus consumption is largely exported at present to regions where there is no infrastructure for waste. The aim of this dialogue with the textile sector is to encourage it to move towards circular production.

A study commissioned by Sveriges Textil- och Modeföretag (TEKO) and the Swedish Trade Federation has highlighted the opportunities for greater textile sorting in Sweden, based in part on our model and expertise. Nordiska Textilakademin, the Nordic Textile Academy, has devised a vocational training programme focusing on textile sorting for reuse: this is also based on our methodology and working method. Employees of SipTex, **run by Sysav, and the world's first large-scale automated sorting facility**, have visited our sorting facility and we have shown that recycling should always come after reuse in sustainable textile management.

Björkåfrihet has also worked to encourage our export customers to approach the European recycling market, thereby helping to strengthen the European textile platform.

Since 2021, Björkåfrihet has been involved in reference groups and projects related to future sustainable plastics management, initially in the form of increased recycling. With the help of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and others, Björkåfrihet is

trying to persuade the plastics industry to save more of its production for reuse and increase pressure on legislation for regulated production of plastic products.

In 2021, a number of local authorities in our catchment area have been contacted and offered sustainable purchasing instead of procurement of newly produced products.

Research and development

One trend we have seen in 2021, perhaps as a result of the pandemic, is that public sector organisations are showing more drive when it comes to sustainable innovation and circular transformation. One example is a feasibility study ahead of the establishment of large-scale mechanical textile tearing in order to examine whether there is any financial viability in this type of circular management of textiles. Another example is the development of new collection streams as a consequence of increased online shopping and **“digital distribution”**. **Discussions with Nordiska Textilakademin in 2021 have led to Björkåfrihet becoming a reference in education with a view to transforming the Swedish textile industry.**

Björkåfrihet has also approached Finnish and Danish research institutes in 2021, as these countries are relatively advanced in terms of large-scale technology for sorting and recycling.

Social responsibility in the labour market

Björkåfrihet seeks to be able to offer people affected by various types of limitations the opportunity to enjoy a working day that is stimulating and sustainable. This means that the way in which we, together, earn the financial resources that are then paid out as aid is, in itself, an important part of our work to achieve our object. During 2021, around 300 people daily had some form of employment organised by or in partnership with Björkåfrihet.

Partnerships with municipalities

Björkåfrihet has worked on employment in partnership with municipalities in western and southern Sweden since 1989. The association currently has 44 active partnerships in 23 municipalities. These employ people primarily in daily activities (people with cognitive impairments) but also in employment activation schemes. **Through Björkåfrihet’s partnerships, people who themselves need help in their day-to-day lives get opportunities to help others by contributing to the organisation’s solidarity work.**

The main activity in the context of partnership working with municipalities is the various aspects of our second-hand business – **collection, sorting and sales in Björkåfrihet’s “Companion” shops. The participants themselves manage collection from around 150 of Björkåfrihet’s 400 or so collection bins, sorting and sales in their own second-hand shops. The surplus from sales at these shops goes to Björkåfrihet’s solidarity and aid projects.** Because of the pandemic, and the fact that many of the participants belong to at-risk groups, most of the shops had to be closed for most of the year.

Some of the organisation’s municipal partners have previously produced baby parcels that have been sent to mothers-to-be in the Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria. With

shrinking aid budgets as a result of the pandemic, the decision was made to stop sending the parcels. Production of the baby parcels has also stopped as a result.

Other goods made from recycled textiles are also produced by means of daily activities with which Björkåfrihet cooperates. The association supports these activities by providing advice, graphic material and marketing.

PR work and visibility

With an interface with both the public and decision-makers, Björkåfrihet is well placed to mould public opinion while also strengthening the brand. The overall focus areas for our outward-facing work are raising awareness of the areas in which we work, propagating **the organisation's values and approach to sustainability and social justice issues** and promoting the organisation and its brand – in so doing providing a better basis for the organisation to work on its objects.

The restrictions imposed on account of the pandemic have forced us for much of the year **to focus the organisation's impact** and initiatives on communications to drive sales. In combination with reduced staff resources in the marketing department, this has meant that advocacy has taken a back seat during the year.

Window displays

Compared to other social justice and environmental organisations, Björkåfrihet's second-hand shops lend it an almost unique platform in the public realm. The association has a tradition of using the window displays on Linnégatan in Gothenburg and Södra Förstadsgatan in Malmö as a stage for political activism and a space for advocacy. The new shop at Knallerian in Borås provides us with two additional window displays to use as a communication channel, which means we have expanded our opportunities to reach **out with the organisation's core values. Our displays for 2021 have included the right to asylum, socialism, occupation and sustainability.** One notable display was the one on the theme of socialism, created by artist Filip Rahim Hansson. This display was highlighted with a report in Göteborgsposten on 23 April. In Malmö, Sydsvenskan wrote about the display and the Left Party in Malmö ran a campaign whereby they painted footsteps and symbols on the ground along the route that would normally be taken by the May Day procession if it were not for the pandemic. These footsteps led to the display window on Södra Förstadsgatan. Another high-profile display was created by all-round artist Nina Grelsson on the theme of sustainability. It showed how easy it is to repair broken Christmas light, and this tip that was widely shared.

Digital presence

By the end of 2021, we saw an increase in both engagement and the number of followers on Instagram. The same development was not apparent on Facebook, which is largely due to the fact that the people who follow us there are interested in our campaigns. The test sale we ran on Tradera brought us several new followers in the Stockholm region, where we currently have no shops. Our sponsored posts have significantly wider reach as a result of skills enhancement measures.

Other campaigns and external events

Despite the pressures and restrictions, the organisation ran a number of successful external activities during the year. Björkåfrihet had a stand at Vänsterdagarna, the Left Days. Here, the organisation had the opportunity to talk to Left Party foreign policy spokesperson Håkan Svenneling and aid policy spokesperson Yasmine Posio about Israel placing our Palestinian partner, UPWC, on the terror list.

We also had a stand at MR-dagarna, the Human Rights Days, where we gave our visitors the opportunity to shop against occupation in our pop-up shop and invited Anna Roxvall and Johan Persson to talk about their book *Till varje pris* [At Any Price], where the authors follow in the footsteps of European migration policy. In the autumn, we were also given the opportunity to furnish the dressing rooms at Pride Park with recycled furniture during Westpride.

Rounding up

In spring and summer, we ran an in-store campaign offering our customers the opportunity to donate to the UHWC hospital in Gaza. This was an emergency collection **as a result of Israel's bombardment of Gaza and the fact that our partner UWHC** accepted large numbers of injured people. Besides the funds raised by the campaign, this gave us the opportunity to tell our customers about our partner organisation, which our staff did more than 4,000 times. We also raised money for the collection on social media.

Tradera

The organisation ran a pilot project selling summer clothes and a range of hard goods via the Tradera platform. This project gave us a good idea of which resources would be needed to pave the way for online sales. There was a great deal of interest from customers and we ended up with lots of new followers on Instagram, especially in places where we do not have physical shops at the moment.

1.4 RESULTS AND POSITION

2021 began with the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which adversely affected sales; albeit to a lesser extent than the previous year. Sales recovered slowly, reaching budget in the last three months of the year in the shops that were up and running.

The closure of our Borås shop for six months has affected our result, but to a limited extent as the insurance company has covered our losses and additional expenses related to the event.

The opening of a new shop in Burlöv involved an investment, but it provides us with good opportunities for increased revenues going forward. The shop got off to a good start despite the pandemic.

Action has been taken to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on our finances, primarily by reining back on personnel expenses and other purchases and expenditure. This, along with a payout on our staff insurance policy, has had an impact and enabled us to achieve a better result than budgeted.

1.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, the organisation will be focusing on continuing its implementation of targeted delivery. Work on this ground to a halt in 2020, and also in 2021 to an extent, when our focus instead was on urgent measures to mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Substantial cuts have been made to aid, in both 2020 and 2021. We will be seeing limited resources from our second-hand activities in 2022 as well, albeit with a slight increase in external support. Efforts will be made to secure additional external support.

Besides increasing support for aid, our main objective will be to build up our reserves again after the pandemic and to repay the taxes and fees that were deferred by the Government. This means that there are limited resources for major investments in the second-hand sector over the next few years. Our ambition is to use our existing resources to increase our profitability – and thus our investment capacity as well – in the long term.

In 2022, our emphasis will be on meeting our sales targets in the second-hand business, working at the two new shops opened in 2021 and ensuring that we reach our production targets and are thus able to supply our shops with goods.

We perceive a need to **expand our sale of textiles within Sweden's borders so that we can** reduce export sales in the long term. Here, we will be continuing to explore the possibilities of primarily selling an outlet range. If we succeed in this, we will continue working on finding the potential configurations for outlet sales going forward.

Future need for help

The needs in the regions where Björkåfrihet works are set to increase, as a consequence not only of the coronavirus pandemic but also of conflict escalation, people being forced to flee and the climate crisis. We believe states are failing in their responsibilities and that civil society organisations will continue to play an important role.

The occupations of Western Sahara and Palestine violate international law, and yet they are allowed to continue. There are widespread violations of the human rights of Sahrawis and Palestinians. There is still a major need for international pressure, as well as humanitarian and political support.

In Sweden, the stringent asylum laws continue to be implemented, which in practice means that both the right of asylum and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child **have been disregarded**. **Björkåfrihet's partner organisations within the asylum justice** movement are noticing an increased need for help as a result of this, and our continued support is important.

1.6 OTHER NON-FINANCIAL INFORMATION

1.6.1 Members

As at 31 December 2021, the association had 43 members, which is 9 members fewer than in the previous year. Membership numbers have been decreasing consistently for several years. Regular membership costs SEK 200 per year, but those who need and want to have the option to pay between SEK 50 and SEK 500 for their membership.

Membership confers the right to vote at the association's Annual General Meeting.

Member groups

Björkåfrihet has no district-level or local associations. However, members who wish to can get involved in issues that they are interested in by organising themselves into working groups.

Volunteers and volunteer work

Volunteers have been regularly involved to a limited extent in the ongoing work in our shops and sorting facilities.

The value of this voluntary work has not been recognised in the income statement.

1.6.2 Employees

In 2021, Björkåfrihet had an average of 153 employees. Of these, 59 per cent were women and 41 per cent were men. The duties related to day-to-day operations, including everything from collections, sorting and sales to project management and administration.

The association is affiliated to the employers' organisation Fremia (formerly KFO) and has collective agreements with the Commercial Employees' Union and Unionen.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to mean that physical workplace meetings could not be held to the same extent as normal: these are usually held 10 times a year. Face-to-face workplace meetings have been held whenever possible in 2021, following risk assessments based on current restrictions. A number of units have been able to hold these meetings digitally, while others have held regular morning meetings with fewer people present. At these meetings, employees have discussed issues relating to their day-to-day work and the work environment. Information that is usually sent out before workplace meetings and regular information on how restrictions and changes in the law in society affect operations has mainly been communicated to all employees digitally during the year via the internal timesheet system, Planday.

1.6.3 Management

Board of Directors

As of the annual meeting on 25 April 2021, the association's Board consisted of a Chair, five members and one deputising member. The Chair was Mikela Lundahl Hero. The Board members were Johanna Söderman Wigh, László Sall Vesselényi, Pelle Hällje, Marlene Midtvedt and Petra Lindberg. The deputising member was Mohammed Smesem.

Mohammed Smesem stepped down in November.

The Board held 11 meetings in 2021. All meetings were minuted.

All Board activity was based on the Board's rules of procedure. The Board managed and minuted all attendance at Board meetings, including that of employees and/or co-opted members, and any conflicts of interest that arose.

Board members received fees during the year. SEK 1000 was paid per month to every Board member, including deputising members, who attended Board meetings in that month that had been agreed in advance. In addition to this, a further SEK 1,000 per month was paid to the Chair and SEK 500 per month to the Vice Chair that was not conditional on attendance at meetings. Members have also had travel costs reimbursed.

Management Team

During the year, the organisation was led by two Managing Directors: Gesica Tawakkoli Gunmalm, responsible for our second-hand operation, and Kristin Ivarsson, responsible for international work and PR. Besides the directors, the management team during the year consisted of Helga Bennysdóttir (HR Director), Ann-Jeanet Jörgensen (Financial Director) who took up her post in June, Sara Edestrand (Sales Director) until June, Ulrica Tholander Edvardsson (Sales Director) from December, Sara Lindgren (Operational Director) until March and Jerry Larusson (Operational Director) from September onwards.

Nomination Committee

The Nomination Committee consisted of Helga Bennysdóttir from the Annual Meeting in April 2021.

Auditors

Auditor: Inger Sjöberg, certified public accountant, Ernst & Young, Gothenburg.

Internal auditor: at the AGM in September 2021 the post of internal auditor was left vacant.

1.6.4 Other information

90 accounts

Björkåfrihet's activity is verified by Svensk Insamlingskontroll (Swedish Fundraising Control) and the organisation has two official '90 accounts', PlusGiro 90 01 71-0 and BankGiro 900-1710.

Representation on other boards

Björkåfrihet has no representatives on any other organisation's board of directors.

Advocacy and sector involvement

Björkåfrihet is a member of the Ideell Second Hand network, which represents the interests of not-for profit second-hand organisations with '90 accounts' in discussions with decision-makers and authorities. Björkåfrihet does not itself undertake lobbying work but does engage actively in public advocacy, with everything from window displays and member activities to trade fairs and opinion pieces in the daily newspapers.

Björkåfrihet is a member of CSR Västsverige, a network that works mainly on sustainability issues and in particular social development within ideologically-driven, public and private organisations.

Since 2020, Björkåfrihet has been a member of Avfall Sverige, a stakeholder body for organisations operating within the field of waste management.

Contact details

Telephone: +46 31 23 30 80

Email: info@bjorkafrihet.se

Address: Aröds industriväg 27, SE-417 05 Gothenburg

Internet

Björkåfrihet can be found online at www.bjorkafrihet.se, facebook.com/bjorkafrihet and www.instagram.com/_bjorkafrihet_.

Shops

By the end of 2021, Björkåfrihet operated six shops under its own auspices, one of which was newly opened and one relocated. A number of other shops were also run through partnerships with municipalities and the addresses of these are listed at www.bjorkafrihet.se/kompisbutiker.

Lantmannagatan 59B	SE-214 48 Malmö, Sweden	+46 40 92 35 40
Linnégatan 9	SE-413 04 Gothenburg, Sweden	+46 31 775 35 40
Södra Förstadsgatan 14	SE-211 43 Malmö, Sweden	+46 15 97 10 40
Bergslenagatan 45	506 30 Borås, Sweden	+46 33 12 48 60
Ångpannegatan 5	SE-417 05 Gothenburg, Sweden	+46 31 51 81 16
Kronetorpsvägen 2	SE-232 37 Arlöv, Sweden	+46 05 92 48 40

2 MULTI-YEAR OVERVIEW

SEK 000

From the balance sheet	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cash and bank balances	17,000	11,672	14,141	13,776	9,459
Fixed assets	6,472	5,503	4,247	3,568	4,010
Current assets	17,369	20,995	19,804	22,742	25,756
Total assets	40,841	38,170	38,192	40,086	39,225
Current liabilities	5,338	2,511	3,585	8,905	10,763
Holiday pay liability	6,121	6,745	6,320	6,671	7,226
Trade payables	4,045	3,326	3,955	3,515	4,157
Equity	25,337	25,588	24,332	20,995	17,079
Total liabilities and equity	40,841	38,170	38,192	40,086	39,225

From the income statement	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Income from activities	91,389	102,696	109,367	92,948	104,444
Staff expenses	-61,137	-61,508	-65,838	-56,836	-63,666
Other expenses	-27,897	-29,700	-35,519	-32,743	-37,960
Depreciation/amortisation	-1,997	-1,851	-1,867	-2,036	-1,621
Financial income/expenses	185	-44	208	-118	172
Profit/loss before cash support	543	9,593	6,351	1,214	1,369
Cash support	-6,947	-9,203	-7,895	-3,921	-3,928
Profit/loss	-6,404	390	-1,544	-2,707	-2,559

Key ratios	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Quick ratio	137%	152%	143%	108%	82%
Equity ratio	62%	67%	64%	53%	44%

Definitions of key ratios

Quick ratio – Cash & Bank + Current assets less stocks/inventories as a percentage of current liabilities

Equity ratio – Equity as a percentage of total capital

3 INCOME STATEMENT

SEK 000	Not e	2021	2020
<u>Income from activities</u>			
Membership fees		9	9
Funds raised		58	2,614
Sales	1	89,517	78,315
Project grants	2	3,944	3,217
Wage subsidy received etc.		644	878
Other income from activities	3	10,272	7,915
Total income		104,444	92,948
 <u>Cost of activities</u>	4, 5		
Project costs related to object	6, 7	-8,989	-9,903
Cost of collection		-97,297	-84,546
Administrative costs		-889	-1,087
Total costs		-107,175	-95,536
 Profit/loss from activities		-2,664	-2,588
 <u>Result from financial investments</u>			
Interest income and similar profit/loss items		364	258
Interest expenses and similar profit/loss items		-192	-376
Total result from financial investment		172	-118
 Profit/loss after financial items		-2,559	-2,706
 Profit/loss for the year		-2,559	-2,706

4 BALANCE SHEET

SEK 000	Not e	31/12/2021	31/12/2020
ASSETS			
Fixed assets			
<i>Tangible fixed assets</i>			
Land and buildings	8	309	327
Equipment	9	3,701	3,241
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		4,010	3,568
Financial fixed assets			
Other long-term receivables		400	0
Total fixed assets		4,410	3,568
Current assets			
<i>Stock/inventories</i>			
Goods for resale		17,056	15,904
<i>Current receivables</i>			
Trade debtors		2,399	1,963
Other receivables		346	3
Tax receivables		794	862
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	10	4,761	4,010
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		8,300	6,838
<i>Current investments</i>			
Cash and bank balances		9,459	13,776
Total current assets		34,815	36,518
Total assets		39,225	40,086

Continuation of balance sheet

SEK 000	Not e	31/12/2021	31/12/2020
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Accumulated capital		18,603	23,530
Designated funds		1,035	171
Profit/loss for the year		<u>-2,559</u>	<u>-2,706</u>
		17,079	20,995
Current liabilities			
Trade creditors		4,157	3,515
Other liabilities	11	7,337	6,888
Accrued expenses and deferred income	12	<u>10,652</u>	<u>8,688</u>
		22,146	19,091
Total equity and liabilities		39,225	40,086

Fel! Ogiltig länk.

	Designated funds	Accumulated capital	Profit/loss for the year	Total
Amount at start of year	171	23,530	-2,707	20,994
Reclassification of previous year's result		-2,707	2,707	0
Profit/loss for the year			-2,559	-2,559
Utilised designated funds	-1,356			-1,356
Allocation purpose	2,220	-2,220		0
	1,035	18,603	-2,559	17,079

5 CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	01/01/2021 - 31/12/2021	01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020
<u>Operating activities</u>		
Profit/loss from activities	-2,663	-2,588
Adjustments for items not included in the cash flow		
Depreciation/amortisation	1,621	2,036
Retained interest	297	258
Interest paid	-192	-376
Cash flow from operating activities before changes in working capital	-938	-670
Change in stock/inventories	-1,152	-1,828
Change in current receivables	-1,862	-1,110
Change in current liabilities	3,055	5,235
Cash flow from operating activities	-897	1,627
<u>Investment activities</u>		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	-2,064	-1,361
Cash flow from investment activities	-2,064	-1,361
<u>Financing activities</u>		
Change in designated funds	*-1,356	-632
Cash flow from financing activities	-1,356	-632
Cash flow for the year Increase/Decrease in cash and cash equivalents	-4,317	-365
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	13,776	14,141
Cash and cash equivalents at year end	9,459	13,776

* A sum of SEK 1,356 thousand from designated funds has been utilised to supplement the cash support.

The cash flow statement has been prepared using the indirect method. The cash flow reported only covers transactions that involved inward or outward payments.

The organisation defines cash and cash equivalents as cash funds and credit available from banks and other credit institutions.

6 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Accounting and valuation principles

Björkåfrihet's accounting and valuation principles are in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act and BFNAR 2012:1 Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements (K3).

As the value of the buildings is a very small amount, it has not been subdivided into components.

The accounting principles are also based on the Guidelines for Annual Reports produced by FRIL (the voluntary organisations' fundraising council).

Björkåfrihet uses an income statement classified by function.

Income reporting

Income is shown at the fair value of what has been or will be received.

Grants from other organisations are shown in terms of the amounts that have been utilised. Unutilised amounts are shown as liabilities.

Project costs related to object

Project costs are costs that are directly related to the vision and mission in Björkåfrihet's constitution. They include costs for our aid projects, information, awareness raising and material aid.

The item includes the salary costs and administrative costs for the staff working on these projects and shared costs allocated across all strands of our work.

Cost of collection

Collection costs include all aspects of our second-hand business, starting with the collection of clothing and other items and finishing with these being sold in our shops. Amongst these are costs associated with the handling of the items such as transport, sorting, price labelling, export sales, retail sales and marketing. Collection costs also include expenditure on staffing and facilities in connection with collection.

Administrative costs

Administrative costs are costs necessary for the administration of Björkåfrihet.

These include some of the salary costs for the organisation's Directors and the administrative staff (finance, HR, IT etc.) and allocated shared costs.

Receivables

Receivables are recognised as the payment expected in each individual case.

Valuation of stock/inventories

Donated goods are measured at their sale value less sales overheads and obsolescence.

Fixed assets

Tangible and intangible fixed assets are measured at cost less depreciation/amortisation according to plan. Assets are depreciated/amortised systematically over their estimated economic life.

The following depreciation/amortisation periods have been applied:

Buildings	30 years
Improvements to another party's property	5-20 years
Equipment and vehicles	3-10 years

Accounting principle for the cash flow statement

The cash flow statement has been prepared using the indirect method. The cash flow reported only covers transactions that involved inward or outward payments. The organisation defines cash and cash equivalents as cash funds and credit available from banks and other credit institutions.

7 NOTES TO THE INCOME STATEMENT AND BALANCE SHEET

Note 1. Sales

	2021	2020
Retail sales	80,011	68,629
Sales through partnerships with municipalities	2,125	2,218
Wholesale sales	7,381	7,468
Total	89,517	78,315

Note 2. Project grants

	2021	2020
ForumCiv	3,679	3,217
Swedish Institute	265	0
Total	3,944	3,217

Amounts of external grants taken up as income during the year correspond to the amounts of project costs during the year. Unutilised portions of grants received are shown as liabilities.

The sum above includes grants for administration.

Note 3. Other income from activities

	2021	2020
Restructuring support	1,090	1,657
Short-term support	0	2,218
Compensation for sick pay expenses	1,156	1,096
Insurance compensation	5,437	0
Other income from activities	2,589	2,944
Total	10,272	7,915

Note 4. Staffing

Salaries, other remuneration and social security expenses

	2021	2020
Salaries (senior management)	1,061	1018
Salaries and other remuneration (other employees)	44,570	40,178
Social security expenses including labour market insurances	17,123	15,003
Other staffing expenses	912	637
Total	63,666	56,836

Average number of employees

	2021		2020	
		Of whom men		Of whom men
Average number of employees	153	63	144	59

Board members and senior management

	2021		2020	
	Numbers at accounting year-end	Of whom men	Numbers at accounting year-end	Of whom men
Board members	6	2	7	2
Other senior management	2	0	2	0

Note 5. Leasing

Björkåfrihet primarily leases office, retail and warehousing premises and lorries and trucks. Leasing charges charged to expenses amount to SEK 15,942 thousand (previous year SEK 14,323 thousand).

Leasing charges fall due in the future as follows:

	2021	2020
Within 1 year	745	3,221
Within 1-5 years	10,806	5,913
Later than 5 years	3,984	1,605

Total

15,535

10,739

Note 6. Project costs related to object

	2021	2020
Support in Sweden	-1,080	-823
Support in Palestine/Lebanon	-3,867	-2,499
Support in Western Sahara/Algeria	-287	-598
Partnerships with municipalities	-1,122	-1,004
Other including staffing costs	-2,633	-4,979
Total	-8,989	-9,903

Note 7. Cash support

A sum of SEK 1,356 thousand from designated funds has been utilised to supplement the cash support.

Note 8. Land and buildings

	2021	2020
Accumulated cost		
Opening cost	560	560
Closing accumulated cost	560	560
Opening depreciation/amortisation	-233	-215
Depreciation/amortisation in the year	-18	-18
Closing residual value according to plan	-251	-233
Closing residual value according to plan	309	327

Note 9 Equipment and vehicles

	2021	2020
Accumulated cost		
Opening cost	22,874	21,513
Disposal	-1,221	0
Purchases in the year	2,063	1,361
Closing accumulated cost	23,716	22,874
Opening depreciation/reversal of disposal	-19,634	-17,616
Disposal	1,221	0
Depreciation/amortisation in the year	-1,603	-2,018
Closing accumulated depreciation/amortisation	-20,016	-19,634
Closing residual value according to plan	3,701	3,241

Note 10. Prepaid expenses and accrued income

	2021	2020
Prepaid rental payments	3,057	2,566
Other prepaid expenses	1,579	1,432
Other accrued income	125	12
Total	4,761	4,010

Note 11. Current liabilities

	2021	2020
Tax deduction at source (PAYE)	908	713
Gift vouchers and credit notes	301	150
Deferred social security contributions and PAYE	6,128	6,025
Total	7,337	6,888

Note 12. Accrued expenses and deferred income

	2021	2020
Social security contributions and payroll tax	1,789	963
Holiday pay	7,226	6,672
Grants received but not utilised	435	0
Other items	1,202	1,053
Total	10,652	8,688

	31/12/2021	31/12/2021
<u>Pledged assets</u>		
Floating charge	7,300	7,300
Contingent liabilities	None	None

Gothenburg, xx/xx/2022

Mikela Lundahl Hero

Chair

László Sall Vesselényi

Member

Petra Lindberg

Member

Johanna Söderman Wigh

Member

Marlene Midtvedt

Member

Pelle Hällje

Member

Our auditor's report was submitted on xx/xx/2022.

Ernst & Young AB

Inger Sjöberg

Authorised public accountant