Migration

In this brochure you will meet a number of people who have come to Sweden for various reasons. Their stories provide an opportunity to better understand the regulatory framework and why migration is a natural part of a society.

MIGRATION IS ONE OF TODAY'S MAJOR ISSUES
By nature migration is transnational. People move between different countries in the world. Some are forced to flee from persecution but most move for other reasons. The reason can be to start a family, work or study in another country. Migration often plays a major role in the development of both the countries of origin and the recipient countries.

THE ROLE OF THE SWEDISH MIGRATION AGENCY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF ASYLUM LAW AND REGULATED IMMIGRATION
The Swedish Migration Agency is for people seeking protection in Sweden and for those who want to work, study or live here. We receive applications, review them and make decisions about who is entitled to come here, stay here or who must leave the country.

THE GROUNDS FOR RESIDENCE PERMIT
The different grounds for a residence permit are:
- need for protection (asylum)
- relative
- guest student
- work
- Swedish citizenship.

Need for protection (asylum)
Everyone has the right to seek asylum, it is a human right. The Swedish Migration Agency will investigate if the person seeking protection is entitled to a residence permit under the Aliens Act. The Swedish Migration Agency also provides a quota for refugees to come to Sweden on the annual refugee quota. Read more on pages 5–9.

Relative
Relatives of someone who is already living in Sweden includes husband/wife/registered partner or cohabiting partner, as well as children under the age of 18 years. Adult siblings or the parents of adult children can normally not get a residence permit as a relative. Read more on pages 10–11.

Guest student
The studies must be at a university or college. The students must pay for the study place and show that they are able to support themselves during the study period. Read more on pages 12–13.

Work
An employee must present a work offer from an employer in Sweden. The work offer must be enclosed with the application for a residence permit and work permit, and the salary must be sufficiently high. Read more on pages 14–15.

Swedish citizenship
Those who have lived in Sweden for several years can apply for Swedish citizenship. Read more on pages 16–17.
We went from freedom to war. It was summer when we left Syria and full winter here in Sweden when we arrived in December 2012. I was so terribly frozen and I had never heard of a country called Sweden before in my life. At home I had a reason for everything. Here, I had nothing.

When you are forced to start over in a new country and in a new language, you don’t even start from scratch, you have to start over all over again.

In the beginning, I cried every day. All my thoughts started with “why”? So, one day I said to myself: Now you have to start your life. I realised that I couldn’t return.

With school and the language, everything changed. When I also realised that you wouldn’t get anywhere being shy, things started happening. Going to school means a future and that means everything, because if you don’t have a future, why live?

Now I have freedom. Another type of freedom. The freedom we all win is the greatest: to think what you want.

Some things haven’t changed. I still want to be an engineer. My focus is now on completing studies at secondary school but the dream is that the war will end and I can return. Then I could help to rebuild towns and buildings again. I also have another dream: to be able to stand on a stage and sing in front of a large audience.

“From one moment to the next it had been decided that we would leave our home. Now we are going. No more details. I did not know where we would go or why exactly. We went to Turkey. And I left my heart in Syria.”

Perwin, born in 1996 in Aleppo, Syria
Those who are persecuted or at risk of persecution or inhuman treatment in their home country can apply for asylum in Sweden

ASYLUM
Everyone has the right to seek asylum, it is a human right. The Swedish Migration Agency will investigate if the person seeking protection is entitled to a residence permit under the Aliens Act.

Refugees are people who are outside the country in which they are citizens, because they feel a well-founded fear of persecution because of their
• race
• nationality
• belonging to a certain social group

or due to
• their religious or political beliefs
• their gender or sexual orientation

and, because of this fear they cannot or do not want to take advantage of the protection of the country where they are citizens.

Asylum seekers are those who come to Sweden and apply for protection (asylum) here, but who have still not had their application decided.

SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION
Those eligible for subsidiary protection
• risk facing the death penalty
• risk being subject to corporal punishment, torture or other inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment or
• are at serious risk of injury as a civilian for reasons of armed conflict.

Those who receive a no to their application for asylum, must leave Sweden

Anyone who has received a final decision of rejection or expulsion that has come into effect, is no longer entitled to accommodation and subsistence from the Swedish Migration Agency.

The law makes exceptions for families with children who are allowed to stay until their travel home can be arranged.

An application for asylum can only be made after entry into Sweden

All foreigners, except EU citizens, who wish to reside in Sweden must have a residence permit prior to entering Sweden. The application is either made online or through a Swedish embassy. Exceptions are people who are seeking protection.

Since 20 July 2016, Sweden has a temporary law that will apply for three years

According to the law, asylum seekers who have the right to protection will receive a temporary residence permit to stay in Sweden. Those who receive a refugee status declaration will receive a residence permit for three years, and those who obtain the status of persons eligible for subsidiary protection will receive a residence permit for 13 months. When the permit runs out, a new examination will be done regarding the possibility of returning the person to his or her country of origin. The temporary law also limits asylum seekers’ ability to reunite with their families. Only those who receive refugee status and a three-year residence permit will be given an opportunity for family reunification.
Me and my family fled to Iran from the war and poverty in Afghanistan, but there was no future for me there. As my mother once said: It doesn’t matter what you know or what you do – you are already doomed. As a Hazara from Afghanistan, you are being discriminated against in all possible ways. Every hour, you are reminded that you are worth less in the eyes of the beholder. You are looked down on, you are paperless, you are subject to racism, deprived of your opportunities, you are excluded, you are pointed out, you are criminalised and are a clear target for widespread corruption. I should have been able to go to university but was wrongly accused of having stolen money from the mobile store I was working at. The whole thing led to my being forced to flee.

I came to Sweden as an unaccompanied refugee child when I was 16 years old but I’m so much more than that. I am a lecturer, debater, politician, survivor, conference delegate and self-employed business owner. I have an idea about a research project that will improve the situation for unaccompanied refugee children with regard to schooling and the asylum process.

Alireza, born in 1996 in Bamyan, Afghanistan

“I do not define myself as an unaccompanied refugee child. When should you stop being considered as unaccompanied? One year after arrival? Two years? Three years?”
Asylum-seeking children have the same rights as other children in Swedish society

The law states that the Swedish Migration Agency must give special consideration to what is best for the children – a child may have different reasons for asylum than the parents have. When reviewing an application for asylum for a child, the case officer must adapt the review to the age, maturity and health of the child as much as possible.

The municipalities are responsible for the accommodation and care of unaccompanied children under the age of 18, if they cannot live with relatives. All unaccompanied children are entitled to a guardian appointed by the municipality.
“The day my family and I found out that we would get to go to Sweden, we were so happy that we just started screaming. We made such a noise that the neighbours came in and wondered what was happening. But they understood that we were screaming with joy.”

Kavira, born in 1994 in Goma, DR Congo

At first, life was good in Congo. Then the problems came, the conflicts and the enemies just kept coming. My mother’s grandfather was king and there were many who wanted to get him off the throne. Several of my relatives were killed and my father was kidnapped. In order not to meet the same fate, myself and the rest of the family fled to Uganda. We were sheltered in the refugee camp in Kampala as the enemies could also come after us. There were sometimes people outside the camp who would scream at us to go home to Congo. The fear of being killed did not disappear, but we had a roof over our heads and I made friends and had an everyday life.

Although it was tough times in the camp, we were protected and many families were in a similar situation. The majority came from Congo, but there were also refugees from Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Many were given the opportunity to travel on elsewhere, including Canada and the USA. Of course, I was happy for their sake, but also sad. Being the one who was left behind was hard, but after nine years it was our turn. The day my family and I found out that we would go to Sweden, we were so happy that we just started screaming. We made such a noise that the neighbours came in and wondered what was happening. But they understood that we were screaming with joy.

Here in Sweden we have freedom. I have what I need and can do what I want.
I have food, a flat, friends and can study. The only thing that is difficult is the language. When I was young, I wanted to be a pilot but now I’m gunning for my dream to work as a case officer at the Swedish Migration Agency. I want to study different problems and situations in the world in order to then be able to decide whether people get to stay or not. I had that dream in Uganda when I met all the people in the refugee camp and heard about their problems.

I am now studying care and welfare but later on I will try to study law and learn more about other people. One day I would also like to visit Nairobi in Kenya and other countries in the world.

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Only a few of the world’s refugees become so-called quota refugees

Since 1950 Sweden has a resettlement programme with the aim of providing protection to the most vulnerable. Those offered resettlement in Sweden as quota refugees are selected by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. When a refugee is offered resettlement through the programme, the person gets a safe passage to Sweden and an organised reception. Each year, the Government/Parliament allocates funds for the Swedish Migration Agency to resettle between 1,700 and 5,000 quota refugees. Today, approximately 27 countries receive quota refugees on an annual basis.
When I was 17, I moved from my hometown to Alanya where I got a job as a beach boy. We rented out sun loungers and parasols and sold food and drink on the beach. It was perfect! It was fun to work in tourism. The sun shines and everyone is happy. I worked from the morning until late at night. It was there on the beach that I met my wife. The first time we only made eye contact but three years later she came back and I recognised her. I think it was fate that brought us together. When she went home, we stayed in touch on Facebook and then she came and visited me several times. We lived together in Turkey for nine months and got engaged. We wanted to start a family and felt it would be better for us to do it in Sweden. There is no equivalent to SFI in Turkey, so my wife would not have received the same help as I have received here. She wanted to be able to work and not only be a housewife.

The first time in Sweden was a little tough. In Alanya, all Swedes I met were happy and pleasant. They were pleasant here too, but also a little reserved. Many people I met thought that I’d come from the asylum residence nearby and looked at me a little suspiciously.

Burak, born in 1990 in Adana, Turkey

“I thought people looked at me sideways as they thought “Yet another one from Syria”. There was a difference when people found out that I was from Turkey. My mother-in-law is a teacher and many people know her in the village. When they found out I was together with her daughter, I was approved.”
I didn’t want to go out in the first weeks. “I thought people looked at me sideways as they thought “Yet another one from Syria”. There was a difference when people found out that I was from Turkey.

My mother-in-law is a teacher and many people know her in the village. When they found out I was together with her daughter, I was approved. I did work experience in the local supermarket and I now have a job there that I really like. Life is great.

I have a job, car, house, wife and children – just like a Swedish family. It will be easier for me to travel with a Swedish residence permit and above all with a future Swedish citizenship. I want to travel everywhere, see the world.

To get a residence and work permit as a relative is the most common reason for people to become resident in Sweden

Relative initially refers to husband/wife/registered partner or cohabiting partner and children under the age of 18 years who have a connection to a person with a residence permit or citizenship in Sweden. Adult siblings or the parents of adult children can normally not get a residence permit as a relative. The permit must be ready before entry into Sweden.

The rules are slightly different depending on which type of residence permit the person who is living in Sweden has.

Generally, the person in Sweden must be able to support both themselves and the relative who wants to move to Sweden. This applies both to Swedish and to foreign citizens.
Amir, born in 1981 in Teheran, Iran

"According to my sister who studied in Falun, Sweden was dull, cold and expensive. But she is a metropolitan girl – what she calls boring is what I like. I prefer nature and life in the country over big cities and night life."

When I was five years old, my family moved from a flat in central Teheran to a suburb in Karaj, about five kilometres from the capital. I liked it there. We had our own garden and got a dog, a German shepherd called Joe. He was really strong and playful and I remember he was really big, perhaps only because I was so small. I remember how hard I held onto the leash and how he still managed to drag me wherever he wanted. My favourite subjects at school were chemistry and biology. Straight after secondary school I started studying at university in Garmshar to become a veterinary. It was only men who could study to become a veterinary, it was considered to be a male occupation.

When I finished my veterinary education, I started working as an inspector at a bank that took care of insurance matters. When farmers reported that their animals were sick or had died and wanted to make an insurance claim, it was my job to go there and assess the damage. The job meant many hours in a car, which I didn't like. My sister was living here in Sweden then and she suggested that I should come here. In Sweden, I could study ethology, a subject that I like very much and it was that possibility that convinced me to move here. According to my sister who studied in Falun, Sweden was dull, cold and expensive. But she is a metropolitan girl – what she calls boring is what I like. I prefer nature and life in the country over big cities and night life.
I don’t like it when there’s too many people.

When I came to Sweden in August 2010, it was the first time I had been outside Iran. The thing that made the biggest impression on me was the sky. It is so blue here in Sweden, with such beautiful white clouds. In Iran the sky is grey and is either completely covered with clouds or there are no clouds at all. Here the clouds have so many different shapes and in some ways they appear to be closer to earth. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the air is cleaner here. The first winter I was here was covered in snow more than one metre high. It was extremely beautiful.

Studying in Sweden is different to Iran. Here, a large part of the studies are group-based and the students work together. In Iran the studies are more about memorising books and writing essays, which isn’t as fun.

When I had finished my Masters, I was sure that I wanted to apply for a PhD position here. The research that I am doing now is about the domestication of animals. I spend 60 per cent of my time on research, in addition to that I teach and am taking some courses myself.

After I’ve done my PhD, I’d like to research on human diseases. I hope I can get a good and stimulating job.

Guest students pay for both education and their living

The studies must be at a university or college. The student must pay for the study place and show that they are able to support themselves during the whole study period, at present around SEK 8,000 per month. The permit must be ready before entry into Sweden.
Wonnie, born in 1988 in Kingston, Ontario, Canada

“When I was a child, I never reflected on the diversity in Canada.”

I started playing the violin when I was four years old. I hated it at the start! But when I was 14, it changed.

When I was a child, I never reflected on diversity in Canada. In school, there was never any emphasis on people’s ethnicity or religion. When a classmate was away, we would hear that they were celebrating Ramadan or Pesach – and it was almost as if someone fasting was of no significance, but most of us were jealous because the person could escape school.

The diversity was so obvious that I never thought about it until I moved from there. Because in comparison with Canada, I don’t think that diversity is particularly apparent in Sweden. It is seen more in Stockholm, but even here I’ve stood on a stage in front of 800 people – and have been the only one that wasn’t white.

A Swedish musician I got to know thought that I should come to Sweden and audition for the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra.

I travelled to Stockholm and auditioned – and got the job. I was so happy. When I came here, I rented a room in a house with a family in Sundbyberg. They gave me a really good introduction to Sweden, invited me to Christmas celebrations and taught me “Helan
An employee must have a work permit and a sufficiently high salary in order to be able to be granted a residence and work permit

An employee who is not a citizen of an EU country must show an offer of employment from an employer in Sweden. The permit must be ready before entry into Sweden.

The offer of employment must be enclosed with the application for the residence and work permit. The salary must be sufficiently high for the person to be able to support themselves. Asylum seekers and guest students also often have the right to work.

EU citizens do not need to apply for residence permits

EU citizens who have sufficient means to support themselves through their own funds or employment, are entitled to live and work in Sweden without having to apply for a residence permit.

The Swedish Tax Agency will register the EU citizen and issue the ten-digit personal identification number.
I moved to Sweden in 2010 but I am originally from Scarborough, the windswept coast in the north-east of United Kingdom. My wife is from Malmö, so as we had lived in England for many years, it felt right to move to Sweden. We were married in the Swedish Church in Copenhagen, so you could say I gradually moved closer to Sweden.

I have been a professional member of the military in the British Army for 13 years. Initially in the infantry, and then later as an officer, I got the opportunity to focus on communications. I have served in the United Kingdom, Germany, Belize in Central America, France, Belgium, Canada and Cyprus. I’ve also been a guard at the Royal Palace in London and it was a privilege to take part in the annual birthday parade for the Queen.

I left the army in 1995 and have since then mostly worked in the sales sector. Now I work for a Swedish online advertising agency which, amongst other, worked on Barack Obama’s

Robert, born in 1964 in the United Kingdom

“Becoming a Swedish citizen was an important mark for me. With a daughter who is a Swedish citizen, I also wanted to become a Swedish citizen, it felt right. Solidarity in action!”
election campaign. The office environment where I work now is extremely relaxed and we often find a reason to celebrate. For example, we visited the Blue Hall in Stockholm City Hall, where the Nobel dinner is held, when our CEO was a finalist in the “Entrepreneur of the Year, Sweden” in 2016. That was a high point.

Becoming a Swedish citizen was an important mark for me. With a daughter who is a Swedish citizen, I also wanted to become a Swedish citizen, it felt right. Solidarity in action! My daughter has really flourished at school in Sweden and also has a lot of activities that she likes such as dancing, playing instruments and fencing. I think the Swedish school system is admirable in that it focuses on all pupils going on to higher education. I also like the “party calendar” in Sweden, especially Christmas and Midsummer and also crayfish parties in August! I like Swedes in general and they seem to be quite influenced by the British and the English language, which means I can speak English for the most part (even if I want to improve my Swedish). I have travelled around Sweden a little bit, even to Lapland, and I like the varying landscape in the country. I am ticked by the idea that if you could put a hinge at the southernmost tip of Sweden, the northern end will reach Rome!

Overall, I think I am very privileged to have become a Swedish citizen!

Anyone who has lived in Sweden for approximately five years can apply for Swedish **citizenship**

Foreign citizens can apply for Swedish citizenship if they

- can prove their identity
- have reached the age of 18
- have a permanent residence permit, a right of residence or a residence card
- have conducted themselves in Sweden
- have met the requirements for residence (lived in Sweden for a certain period of time – often 5 years).

Those who are married to or living with a Swede can apply for Swedish citizenship after three years.

**CHILDREN**

Children will normally become Swedish citizens at the same time as the foreign parent becomes Swedish.

A child with a permanent residence permit may already after three years of residence in Sweden submit a notification to become Swedish, even if the parents do not meet the requirements.

Only Swedish citizens have an unconditional right to live and work in Sweden.
The task and operations of the Swedish Migration Agency

The task of the Swedish Migration Agency comes from the Swedish Parliament and Government. As a Government agency, we comply with Swedish law, international conventions and the state value grounds. We have a large and complex task that changes over time. Our operations span many areas, including the reception of asylum seekers, processing of applications for residence and citizenship.

The Swedish Migration Agency makes decisions regarding work and residence permits, as well as asylum and citizenship. Swedish embassies and consulates abroad receive applications for visas, work and residence permits. Many applications can be made online at the Swedish Migration Agency website.

The Swedish Migration Agency offers temporary accommodation to asylum seekers who cannot arrange accommodation on their own, during the time in which the asylum application is being reviewed. The Agency pays compensation to municipalities and county councils for both asylum seekers who have been granted residence permits and for those who are awaiting a decision.

Those who have their applications for asylum rejected must return home and the Swedish Migration Agency will help them to arrange the journey home. Persons who refuse to leave the country may have their freedom limited and the Swedish Migration Agency may take them into detention. It will then become the responsibility of the Police to ensure that the person travels home. The task of the Swedish Migration Agency also includes providing financial support for those with residence permits who wish to return to their home country.

The Swedish Migration Agency engages internationally in matters relating to the relationship between migration and development. The practical cooperation within the EU is a natural part of our everyday lives that affects asylum, visa work, family immigration, labour immigration and more.

Laws that govern our decisions

The Swedish Migration Agency reviews applications from those who wish to visit or settle in Sweden or become Swedish citizens. We use a legal basis and other rules, and base our decisions on both the applicant’s information and our knowledge of the conditions in the home country. One work tool is the Swedish Migration Agency database for legal and country of origin information, Lifos. A large amount of the material is available on the Swedish Migration Agency website.

Everyone has the opportunity to have their case reviewed in any of the migration courts and possibly also by the Migration Supreme Court if the matter is considered to be of principle significance. Along with the courts, the Swedish Migration Agency is a guarantee that people have the judicial safeguard that the Parliament has decided will apply in Sweden.
The process of an asylum application

1. Application for asylum in Sweden
2. Asylum investigation
3. Decision
   - Yes: The person takes up residence in Sweden
   - No: Continued asylum investigation

The person takes home

4. Decision
   - No: Continued asylum investigation

5. Decision
   - Yes: The person takes up residence in Sweden

You can stay in Sweden

1. You apply for asylum
2. Migration agency decision
3. The Swedish Migration Agency
4. The Migration Court
5. The Migration Court of Appeal

You have the right to appeal within 3 weeks.

Source: Swedish Migration Board 2017-11-30