

The Swedish Buddhist Community (SBG)



Report September 2020

The Swedish Buddhist Council (SBS), has from 01-01-2020 become a registered faith community with a new name, The Swedish Buddhist Community (SBG). It consists of 22 member organisations from all major Buddhist traditions based in Sweden. The total amount of registered members and regularly participants are approx. 11 000 persons. On top of that there are many non registered persons participating.

We are continuing the work of the SBS and cooperate around common projects like Buddhist spiritual care, crisis management, spiritual care in prisons, environmental issues, interreligious activities and networking with municipalities and other institutions. The planning of a Buddhist chaplaincy education is under progress.

During the corona pandemic's lock down the work has been under great pressure and had to switch to different digital forum. The SBG coordinators of the Buddhist care and crisis management have also been participating in regular collaboration meetings with governmental offices. Information around the coronapandemic and Buddhist spiritual resources have been published on the SBG home page.

A joint EBU Action Day 'Walking for the Climate' initiated by SBG could not be implemented because of the corona restrictions around Europe, except of actions in Germany, Finland and SBG taking part in the UK Eco Dharma Network webinar. In Sweden SBG switched to a digital call for a European Buddhist Action Week 'Meditation on non-violence for all beings and environment'.

Another challenge for the Buddhist Community in Sweden is the case of two Buddhist non-profit associations running a temple, have been assessed for payroll tax on the room and boarding of its resident monastics. This may be the start of a general trend and that all Buddhist temples are at risk. The tax department uses a catch-all provision in the income tax law to deem it as a working contract for services. A court process is currently underway.

The SBG administrated during 2019 and 2020 approx. 80 000 Euro a year of general state grants to the SBG member organisations, and approx. 50 000 Euro for the spiritual care project.

Trudy Fredriksson
Chair of the Swedish Buddhist Community