

# How the Vidar Foundation and the Kumlander Family Rewrote the Legacy of Swedish Anthroposophy

In the serene countryside of Sweden, a series of quiet but consequential transformations have unfolded within several foundations originally established to uphold the ideals of anthroposophy—a spiritual movement founded by Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner.

These foundations were meant to serve as guardians of a unique cultural and educational heritage, promoting everything from biodynamic farming and Waldorf education to holistic medicine and the arts. However, under the control of the Kumlander family, the governance and assets of these institutions have come under intense scrutiny. What has emerged is a troubling narrative of power consolidation, questionable financial dealings, and a rewriting of history that raises serious concerns about the integrity and future of these organizations.

## The Vidar Foundation: From Spiritual Mission to Family Enterprise

The Vidar Foundation was established with a clear and noble purpose: to support the anthroposophical movement and its associated endeavors, particularly in Sweden. Founded in 1962 by the Frans Carlgren Foundation and the Agape Foundation —two pillars of the Swedish anthroposophical community—the Vidar Foundation was meant to serve as a financial and organizational cornerstone for projects aligned with Steiner’s spiritual teachings. These projects included everything from holistic education and medicine to artistic and cultural activities rooted in anthroposophy. At its inception, the Vidar Foundation was overseen by a board of respected individuals deeply committed to the movement’s ideals. These included Captain Nils N. Bagge, Phil. lic. Frans Carlgren, and Assessor Sverker Widmark, all members of the Anthroposophical Society. The foundation’s statutes<sup>1</sup> explicitly required that its board members be drawn from this society, with the purpose of ensuring that those at the helm were aligned with the foundation’s mission. Yet, despite these clear guidelines, the foundation’s current board consists exclusively of members of the Kumlander family—an evolution that has raised red flags among those familiar with the foundation’s original intent. This shift in governance suggests a significant departure from the foundation’s founding principles, and it has sparked concerns that the foundation is now serving the interests of a single family rather than the broader anthroposophical community. Compounding these concerns, the Kumlander family has reportedly increased their personal salaries by at least 200%<sup>2</sup> since taking control of the foundation, further indicating a potential misuse of the foundation’s resources for personal gain rather than public benefit.

## Culture Center Järna: A Case of Gradual Manipulation

The transformation of the Culture Center Järna Foundation—originally known as the Rudolf Steiner Seminar Foundation—provides a stark example of how the Kumlander family has gradually exerted control over key anthroposophical institutions. Established in 1965, the foundation was created to foster anthroposophical education, acquiring significant properties in Järna to support its mission. These properties included Säby 1:9, Säby 2:2, and Säby 5:2<sup>3</sup>, which together formed the physical and spiritual heart of the foundation’s activities. However, over the past two decades, the governance and assets of the Culture Center Järna Foundation have undergone a series of changes that have effectively dismantled its original mission. What makes this even more troubling is that these properties were originally acquired through generous donations from various members of the anthroposophical community. Among the most significant contributors was Frans Carlgren, a dedicated anthroposophical philanthropist, and the foundation he established, the Nibble Foundation. Their contributions were instrumental in making these acquisitions possible, with the clear intent that the properties would serve as enduring centers for anthroposophical education and cultural activities. The recent actions by the Kumlander family not only disregard these original intentions but also undermine the legacy of those who made significant sacrifices to

establish the foundation. In 2020, the foundation sold the property Säby 5:2<sup>4</sup>—which included the land surrounding the iconic Culture House in Ytterjärna—to a company controlled by the Vidar Foundation. The deed reflects a purchase price of SEK 6.85 million for the Culture Center Järna Foundation, a figure that financial and real estate experts consider significantly undervalued, given that the transaction included nearly 40,000 square meters of land with several iconic buildings on it. Further complicating matters, in 2024, the Culture Center Järna Foundation sold its remaining properties—Säby 1:9 and Säby 2:2—to Kulturforum Järna AB, a subsidiary of the Vidar Foundation. The price for these properties, which included significant agricultural land and historical buildings, was set at SEK 12.2 million—a figure that many observers believe to be well below market value. The sale, which effectively stripped the foundation of its remaining assets, was signed off by Anders Kumlander and Juhani Selvani on both sides of the transaction<sup>5</sup>, raising obvious concerns about conflicts of interest. Moreover, according to the financial reports<sup>6</sup>, the properties were not paid for in cash by the Vidar Foundation's subsidiary but were instead recorded as a debt, further fueling suspicions about the transparency and fairness of the transaction.

## **A Distorted Historical Narrative**

In addition to the financial and governance concerns, there has been a concerted effort by the Kumlander family to rewrite the history of the foundations under their control. The narrative currently promoted by the Vidar Foundation emphasizes the contributions of Åke Kumlander, portraying the family as central to the foundation's history and development. However, this version of events is at odds with the historical record. The growth and success of these foundations were the result of collaborative efforts by many individuals, not just the Kumlander family. Financial contributions, labor, and intellectual input came from a wide range of members within the anthroposophical community. Yet, the narrative now presented on the Vidar Foundation's website<sup>7</sup>, authored by Anders Kumlander, Juhani Selvani, and Tora Kumlander, largely erases these contributions in favor of a story that centers on their family's role. It's also worth noting that Juhani Selvani is married to Tora Kumlander, who is the daughter of Anders Kumlander, further entrenching the family's influence over the foundation. This distortion of history serves not only to legitimize their current control over the foundation's assets but also to marginalize the contributions of others who were instrumental in the foundation's development.

## **The Agape Foundation: A Case Study in Conflicts of Interest**

The Agape Foundation, another key institution within the anthroposophical community, has also been subject to the influence of the Kumlander family in recent years. Established in 1960 with a mission to support the care and upbringing of children, education, and scientific research, the foundation originally stipulated in its statutes<sup>8</sup> that two-thirds of its board members should be members of the Anthroposophical Society. The foundation has seen its assets gradually depleted through a series of transactions controlled by Anders Kumlander and Juhani Selvani. One of the most significant transactions was the sale of Yttereneby 1:2<sup>9</sup>, a large agricultural and forest property, for SEK 47.8 million. The buyer, Yttereneby Fastighets AB, was a subsidiary of the Agape Foundation at the time, under the control of Kumlander and Selvani. The final maneuver in this orchestrated series of transactions saw the shares of Yttereneby Fastighets AB sold to VS Jordbruk AB<sup>10</sup>, a subsidiary of the Vidar Foundation. This deepened already significant concerns about potential conflicts of interest. These transactions were clearly designed to secure control of the property for the Kumlander family and their associated entities. Once again, instead of receiving immediate payment, the sale was recorded as a debt, further perpetuating the troubling pattern of questionable financial practices under the Kumlander family's influence.

## **The House of Anthroposophy: Another Asset Lost**

The House of Anthroposophy Foundation, established in 1986 to provide a physical space for anthroposophy-related activities, has also seen its mission compromised. The foundation built and

owned the Culture House in Ytterjärna, a significant cultural center completed in 1992. However, on December 31, 2020, this property was sold to a company controlled by the Vidar Foundation for SEK 6.9 million<sup>11</sup>—a fraction of its original investment value. The sale has been criticized as yet another example of how the Kumlander family has benefitted from the financial and asset-based transactions of these foundations, often at the expense of their original missions. At the time of the Culture House's inauguration, it was hailed as a beacon of anthroposophical ideals. The Swedish royal family, the Academy of Fine Arts, other foundations, companies, and countless individuals all contributed to its creation. Anders Kumlander, then chairman of the Anthroposophical Society, assured these supporters that the cultural center would not only become the focal point of a planned free college for anthroposophy but also serve as a public cultural space to address future societal challenges. Now, with the sale of the Culture House, those grand promises have been rendered void, leaving behind a legacy of broken commitments and a stark contrast between the foundation's original mission and its current trajectory under the Kumlander family's control.

## **The Broader Implications: A Call for Accountability**

The pattern emerging from these transactions and governance changes is one of power consolidation by the Kumlander family within the anthroposophical movement. Their influence now extends across multiple foundations, including the Vidar Foundation, the Agape Foundation, the House of Anthroposophy Foundation, and the Culture Center Järna Foundation and the Hilma af Klint Foundation as both Anders Kumlander as well as Juhani Selvani are currently members of the board of the Hilma af Klint Foundation, positions they have received as representatives of the Anthroposophical Society in Sweden<sup>12</sup>. This consolidation of power, coupled with the questionable financial practices and historical distortions, poses a significant threat to the integrity and future of these institutions. The erosion of transparency and the apparent self-enrichment at the expense of public trust are troubling developments that warrant close scrutiny. The silent takeover of these foundations is not just a Swedish issue but a cautionary tale for non-profit organizations worldwide. It highlights the importance of vigilant governance, ethical standards, and a commitment to the original mission of charitable institutions.

## **Conclusion: Preserving the Legacy of Anthroposophy**

The story of the Vidar Foundation and its associated entities is a stark reminder of how easily a foundation's purpose can be subverted when governance structures are weakened. The gradual manipulation of these institutions by the Kumlander family represents a profound betrayal of the principles upon which they were founded. As these developments come to light, it is imperative that the relevant authorities investigate the actions of those involved and take steps to restore the foundations to their original missions. The legacy of anthroposophy in Sweden is at stake, and the broader anthroposophical community must act to ensure that the resources entrusted to these foundations are used for the public good, in accordance with the ideals of Rudolf Steiner. Only through transparency, accountability, and a recommitment to the founding principles can these institutions be preserved for future generations.

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1. <https://safetrade.media/onewebmedia/Vidarstiftelsen.pdf>
2. <https://safetrade.media/onewebmedia/Inkomst.pdf>
3. <https://safetrade.media/onewebmedia/Ga%CC%8Avobrevet%20.pdf>
4. <https://safetrade.media/onewebmedia/Sa%CC%88by52.pdf>
5. <https://safetrade.media/onewebmedia/Sa%CC%88by19&22.pdf>
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