

Maths for all, without borders

Imagine you have brought together a group of experienced maths teachers to create a new teaching tool. Imagine that they are also supported by researchers in mathematical education. And imagine that everything they produce will be completely free to use. It may sound far-fetched, but this is the Akelius Math Learning Lab.

THE AKELIUS FOUNDATION, headed up by property magnate Roger Akelius, began developing language courses for refugees in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis. Today, around 60 people – mainly based in Berlin – work to produce language courses in partnership with UNICEF. These courses are available online for anyone to use. But Roger also has a passion for mathematics, so a new initiative has now been launched to produce maths teaching tools for refugees. At the end of last year, collaboration began between the Akelius Foundation and the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology.

Professor of Mathematics Samuel Bengmark is the director of the new collaboration. Together with a handful of col-

leagues at the Department of Mathematical Sciences and a team of newly hired maths editors, he has set up the Akelius Math Learning Lab. The eight new employees have mainly joined the project from schools, and have solid expertise within the field of education.

“There are two different groups that will collaborate on two tasks: creating material for learning maths and researching the material,” he explains.

THE LEARNING MATERIAL’S requirements are that it should be digital and available on a tablet. It should be possible to use the material in situations where there is no teacher available, for example in refugee camps. The material should also be available online, 



⊕ Creating the teaching tools of the future

WHAT: The Akelius Math Learning Lab is a collaboration between the Akelius Foundation and the Department of Mathematical Sciences, which is a joint department at the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology. The aim is to create a digital teaching tool for mathematics, and to research the material.

WHEN: The collaboration began in November 2023, and is a five-

year project. The first part of the teaching tool will be ready for testing with the target group in spring 2025.

WHY: A teaching tool that can be used by everyone without a teacher being available could increase knowledge of maths among vulnerable groups who do not attend normal schools. It could also be used in other contexts, for example by schools that cannot afford teaching materials.