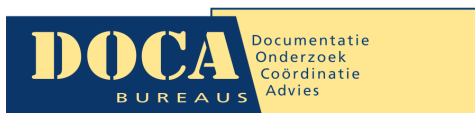


Inclusion and education in European countries

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Inclusive Exclusion or Exclusive Inclusion?

Granting Access, from Theory to Practice – “Education for All” in Sweden

INTMEAS – Report, Sweden

Strategies for supporting schools and teachers in order to foster social inclusion

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Abbreviations and terms

AKK, *Alternativ och kompletterande kommunikation* – alternative and complementary communication (program for the disabled)

AMS – *arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* / The Labour Market Board

AMU, *arbetsmarknadsutbildning* – Labour-market related education

AVET – Advanced vocational and educational training

KY – *kvalificerad yrkesutbildning*, **yrkesvux** / skilled vocational training

Basår – basic (preparatory) year

BO – *Barnombudsmannen*, The Children's Ombudsman

BEO – *Barn- och elevombudsmannen*, The Children's and school students'/ Pupils' Ombudsman

CFL – *Centrum för flexibelt lärande* /Center for learning flexible /education

DO – *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen* /The Office of the ombudsman against [ethnic and religious]* discrimination

* The earlier office, until 2008. Since January 1st 2009, there is only one (general) Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination (on all grounds earlier covered by 4 specialized anti-discrimination Offices mentioned below: JämO, HO, HomO)

HO – *Handikapp ombudsmannen* /The ombudsman against discrimination based on functional disorders/ handicap

HomO – The ombudsman against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation

JämO – *Jämställdhetsombudsmannen* / The equal opportunities ombudsman;

Folkbidning – liberal adult education sector

Folkhögskola – Folk High-school,

Folkbildning – liberal adult education, non-formal and voluntary

Folkbildningsrådet -The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

Förskola – pre-school

Öppen förskola – open pre-school

Förskoleklass – pre-school class (6-7 years' old, the year preceding the first school year)

Familjedaghem – family daycare

Fritidshem - after-school recreation centre [for junior school children]

Fristående skola – independent/ private school

Grundskola - nine-year [compulsory] school, elementary school

Gymnasiet - Britt. (approx.) [comprehensive] upper secondary school; Amer. (approx) [senior] high school

Gymnasieskola – upper secondary school, high-school

Gymnasial utbildning – upper secondary education

Gymnasieskolans individuella program – secondary education's individual program

Gymnasial komvux – upper secondary adult education form

Gymnasial vuxenutbildning – upper secondary adult education

Högskola – university college

Kommun – Municipality

Komvux - kommunal vuxenutbildning, municipal adult education

Grundläggande komvux – basic municipal adult education

Påbyggnad komvux – advanced municipal adult education

Landsting – County council

Licentiat - licentiate

Lärling - apprentice

Lärlingsutbildning – apprentice education

Läroverket – (hist.) former equivalent to *Skolverket*; former [State] secondary grammar school

Länsstyrelsen - County administrative board

Lärarlyftet – Teacher's (knowledge) lift (program)

NU, *nationella utvärderingen* – national evaluation (by the National Agency for Education)

Näringsliv(et) – Economic activity /*Svenskt näringsliv* – Confederation of Swedish Enterprises

Preparandprogrammen - preparatory program

Påbyggnadsutbildning – advanced education (post-secondary education)

Påbyggnadsyrkesutbildning - advanced vocational education (post-secondary education)

REDAH- centers /*Center för databaserade hjälpmedel* – Center for data-based help-means

Sameskolan – the Saami school

Sametinget – The Saami Parliament

SFA – *Svenska för akademiker* / Swedish for immigrants with academic qualifications

SFI – *Svenska för invandrare*/ Swedish for (adult) immigrants

SIH - *Statens institut för handikappfrågor i skolan*/ The state's institute for handicapp issues in school

Skolverket - Swedish National Agency for Education

Specialskola – Special school

SOU – *Statens offentliga utredningar* / (litt.) ”The state's official reports”, Official Committee Reports that precede legislation changes or adoption of new legislation in Sweden

SPSM, *Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten* - The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (from July 1st 2008)

Särskola - special school [for mentally handicapped children]

Särvux - special school for adult education [for mentally handicapped adults]

SSV – Statens skola för vuxna

Studieförbund – Study Associations (for open, liberal adult education)

Träningskolan – training school

Universitetet - university

VAL – *Vidareutbildning av obehöriga lärare*/ Further education of unqualified teachers, i.e. persons working as teachers but do not have a pedagogical exam

Vuxenutbildning – adult education

Grundläggande vuxenutbildning – basic adult education

Yrkesutbildning – vocational training

Yrkesvux – vocational training for adults

1 Introduction

The Swedish education system is closely intertwined with the development of the welfare state system and the general post-war evolution of the country. The content of this study on inclusion and education in ten European countries should therefore also be seen and interpreted in that particular context.

Skola, vård och omsorg – school, healthcare and (child) care have “traditionally” been central electoral issues, used to a large extent as an argument for the Social Democratic engagement for the general welfare of the people and to guarantee a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people.

In the context of this study, knowing this background with regard to the extensive debates and challenges throughout the years about various aspects of the education system – including pre-school, explains to an extent the large number of official documents and proposed reforms even though these haven’t necessarily been applied, sometimes not at all and other times modified, postponed and even discretely “borrowed” by the opposition, adopted and presented

For the purpose of this study, one important side-effect is that there were quite a number of changes of importance for the Swedish context, but insufficiently achieved or having been insufficiently long time in force to have a possibility to evaluate the actual impact and results of changes. In the same time, that should not justify leaving out the changes, for the sake of correctness. Other times, the effects are combined and need to be contextualized in order to understand the correlations between various factors that amount in change new directions, or new debate issues. On the whole, this report should, as already mentioned above, also be understood in the particular context of Sweden, and interpreted accordingly – and in a comparative perspective. This is also relevant for the particular terms of reference of this study as matters regarding school and even related care issues – e.g. regarding aspects of inclusion that are not “visible” as such with regard to access to education, but rather within the social insurance and health system, which make it possible for e.g. most disabled to have a normal, dignified existence, while participating on equal terms in the mainstream education system. In certain respects, Sweden solves special aspects of e.g. the education system in a way perhaps differing from other countries. The interest for school, healthcare and (child)care goes on the one hand through the specificity of the country’s administration system – where

e.g. every aspect related to health issues fall within responsibility areas of the County Councils (*landsting*), in charge within a regional perspective with issues of health and public transportation. Dealing with disability-related issues¹ - implicitly granting the necessary means for mainstreaming disabled in the education system and (to the extent that is possible) on the labour market, falls thus within the County Councils' authority, and is not as such dealt with by the education system – but it is thus interesting in the context of this study, through its implicit relevance for aspects of inclusion within the education system, which may be a particularity of the Swedish approach in matters of inclusion in educational context. Through that it becomes the more relevant for this study to take into account relevant political debates and related information, which should enable one to better understand this particular context.

2 Overview – General context

Free and equal access to education and lifelong learning are among the pillars of the Swedish welfare state. In the developmental course of the Swedish migration and integration policy over the years, the assumption and sometimes assessment of the (potential) integrational role of the school as a natural arena of social integration – implicitly social inclusion – has been rather constant, at least in a theoretical perspective, beyond the numerous issues and eventual problems equally associated with it in practice, if in an enlarged perspective. Traditionally during modern times, the school has been considered as a basic institution and instrument not only of socialisation, but also for achieving social levelling and equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender or socio-cultural background. According to the (Swedish) Education Act (1985:1100), § 2:

“All children and young persons shall irrespective of gender, geographic residence and social and financial circumstances, have equal access to education in the national school system for children and young persons. The education shall be of equal standard within each type of school, wherever in the country it is provided”.

Today, the school is also considered as one of the most important socio-political integration forums for children and youth with diverse ethnic and cultural background, in its role as a “school for all”, meant to offer them similar opportunities whatever their starting point,

¹ including advanced health-care and providing special means such as: specially designed wheel-chairs – often high-tech, individually designed for the user's particular needs; special computer-systems, enabling even persons with serious disabilities to participate on as equal terms as possible in every aspect of everyday existence, or personal assistants – that in cases requiring that kind of assistance are a part of the assistance granted through the social insurance system

considering their various needs and skills, but also respect and value the differences among them. From an integrational perspective, this implies a comparison of the school performance of these groups with immigrant background with comparable groups of the majority population.

The Swedish Education System

The general pattern of the Swedish education system follows a traditional development, where the needs of every age group as well as the needs of the society should be properly fulfilled². According to Eurybase data, “almost half of the Swedish population is involved in some form of organized education. In 2005, 36 percent of the population was between 0-29 of age and slightly more than 995 000 young people were involved in compulsory education”. The same year (2005), there were 352 860 persons attending higher secondary education (*gymnasiet*) – (383 813 persons in 2007), 148 648 in adult education (KOMVUX) (108 784 in 2007), other 332 228 in higher education (university) (320 605 persons in 2007), and 124 468 person in other forms of education (115 499 in 2007)³.

Structure of the Swedish education system

Pre-primary education – ISCED 0 (1-5/6 years of age or 1-12 years old)

- Pre-school education system:

- Pre-school, *förskola* (1-5 years' old) in municipal or independent/ private management
- Pre-school classes, *förskoleklasser* (6 years' old) until they start primary /compulsory school (normally at 6 or 7 years old). Voluntary attendance
- Family day-care homes, *familjedaghem* (1-12 – mostly attending: 1-5 years' old); Organised most often in the care-taker's own home.
- Open pre-school, *öppen förskola* (1-5 years' old), part-time organized activities and counselling for children not enrolled in the pre-school, where parents or caretakers take their children at times.

- **School-children childcare** (leisure time /after-school activities for children between 1-12 years' old)

- Leisure/ after-school center, *fritidshem* (1-12 years' old)
- Open after-school/leisure centres (6-12 years' old)

- **Compulsory education** (class 1-9, age 6/7-15/16 – single structure, no institutional

² The following section is mainly based on data obtained from the National Agency for Education, *Skolverket*, as well as data from the European database Eurydice.

³ According to data from the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*)

distinction, covering a two steps ISCED classification – see below).

- **Primary education** – ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 – elementary, lower secondary education:

– **Elementary** (ISCED 1; classes 1-6; *grundskola* – compulsory (primary) education; special schools (*specialskolan*) for children with certain handicaps (children with impaired hearing, vision or speech disabilities) and compulsory school for the intellectually disabled (*särskolan*), 1-6;

– **Lower secondary** (ISCED 2(a) – classes 7-10(9); *grundskola/ specialskola/ särskola 7-9*)

Compulsory education, i.e.: nine-year compulsory school. Proposed: an additional 10th year*

Now the system is only considered as a continuous nine-year education, with hardly marked divisions, (see above the ISCED classification in 2 steps: elementary, lower secondary)

*Proposed 10th year of compulsory education, to be already introduced in autumn 2009; it is currently tested in two school in Stockholm; addressed to pupils not having qualified to attend post-compulsory school/ to form a bridge “in-between” compulsory and post-compulsory education, for children leaving the compulsory school with incomplete or insufficient results. (Björn Johansson – answering questions on behalf of the National Agency for Education: “for some classes might simply be better to repeat the 9th grade”/DN.17 April 2009, Skolverket).

The *Saami* school, *sameskolan*, is a particular form of the compulsory education system meant to cover the specific requirements of Sweden’s oldest minority, the *Saami* population (situated basically in the far Northern part of Sweden – actually a population comparable in a way with the first nations people in Canada and the US, with a distinctive language and cultural profile and traditions, enjoying not only the protection granted to linguistic minorities but also a regional semi-independent status, with an own local Parliament, *Sametinget* – that also enjoys a status of official authority within the same territory. The territories of the *Saami* population exist not only within the Swedish borders, but stretch also within areas situated in Norway, Finland and Russia). *Sameskolan* covers primarily the first 6 years of the compulsory education (similar to years 1-6 in *grundskolan*, the primary education) and they can continue to get an integrated education in their mother tongue even in years 7-9, approximately lower secondary – according to the ISCED classification).

Independent (private) schools (fristående skolor) - provided by private physical or legal persons, either with a special profile (e.g. Waldorf education), some international (e.g. bi- or multilingual profile, English, French, German) but also with an ethnic or confessional profile (since 2006). There are independent (private) schools (already on pre-compulsory school level) on the compulsory school level (*grundskola*), or on upper-secondary (*gymnasieskola*) level. They may even organise pre-school classes connected to independent elementary schools or special schools on elementary level (see *specialskola*).

- **Post-compulsory education:**

– Three-year (normally) non-compulsory program (app. 16-19/20 years)

- **Upper secondary education** (*Gymnasiet*) (ISCED 3(a) *gymnasieskolans nationella program & gymnasieskolans specialutformade program/ specialskolan /särskola*);

Specialskola / Special schools for the disabled - mainly for pupils with impaired hearing/vision and speech disabilities exist for children who because of impaired hearing or deafness cannot attend compulsory comprehensive school.

* (ISCED 3 (c) *gymnasieskolans individuella program/ lärlingsutbildningen, yrkesutbildning, etc.* – Various forms of vocational training)

Continued education and training for young school-leavers and adults

Municipal adult education: (*komvux – grundläggande, gymnasial, påbyggnad; SFI*)

- Basic adult education (*grundläggande vuxenutbildning*)
- Upper secondary education (*gymnasial vuxenutbildning*)
- Post-secondary training programmes (*påbyggnadsutbildningar*)

(also vocational, upper-secondary individual program – repeating & completing elementary education, and introduction courses for immigrants; *Komvux on pre-higher secondary level – basic adult education, and särsvux – basic special adult education & training school*)

Adult education: *Komvux, SSV – statens skola för vuxna* (national school for adults, 'särsvux')

Särsvux is a special **adult education form for the impaired** (adults with learning disabilities).

SFI - "Swedish tuition for immigrants", free courses in Swedish specially organised for immigrants. May be basic or advanced (the most advanced courses though are to be found in universities or as special preparatory programs for higher education attendance purposes).

* SFA (Swedish for Academics) Special courses for professionals, especially for those requiring a licence to profess (medical professionals – doctors, nurses; architects, etc.) may be offered the possibility to follow special courses after they “graduated” from the initial stages of the program. Not as widely established as SFI as such, mostly as special (temporary) program, involving the cooperation of the licensing body (e.g. *Länsstyrelsen* for the medical profession).

The Swedish Agency for **flexible learning** (CFL – *Centrum för flexibelt lärande* / “Center for flexible learning” (ISCED 3(m); develops new methods for distance education, providing distance education courses; these are adult education programs, giving working adults the possibility to complete their high-school studies or better their results e.g. in order to be able to continue their studies on an academic level or bettering their situation on the labour market.

Advanced Vocational and Educational Training (AVET) (*kvalificerad yrkesutbildning – KY, yrkesvux*⁴), post –secondary training program of which one third of the time is spent at a workplace, organised (in cooperation) by municipalities, educational companies and university colleges together with actors from working life (*näringslivet*)

Labour-market related education (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*), for which responsible organiser is The Labour Market Board (AMS – *Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen*); labour market-related training intended primarily for unemployed adults in need of retraining or further training and education to “adapt” their qualifications to the requirements of the labour market

Liberal adult education sector (*folkbildning*), providing adult education through open high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and adult education association (*studieförbund*). A variety of courses, some comparable to supplementary educational programs, labour market training programs or vocational training/ advanced vocational training programs in terms of content.

⁴ See DN 17 April 2009 – “*Inget behov till fler platser till yrkesvux*” – No need for more many places in vocational training for adults

- **Tertiary education** – (ISCED 5): University Colleges and Universities**

Högskola / Universitet, (ISCED 5) Higher / University education

- three to six years programmes (40 points corresponding to as many weeks of study/ year**)
- graduate/ post-graduate programmes, one-two years (MA-equivalent, rather new here)
- so-called '*licentiate*' post-graduate programmes, approx. equivalent to a half-doctorate
- doctoral programmes, generally four-years programmes (160 points)

* (ISCED 4a – *Basår, komvux/högskolan* – “Basic” year on the university or adult education, *komvux*, preparatory year – compare to the American “College”)

** Until July 1st 2007, when the system was adapted to the Bologna process and restructured, including as to the grading system, adapted too.

Legal and administrative context of the Swedish educational system

The educational system in Sweden is based on the idea of ensuring an appropriate standard of education to all residents of the country, Swedes and non-Swedes alike. In the Swedish legal context, special attention was devoted to keep up and review the entire Swedish legislation to maintain and develop an appropriate framework for ensuring a functioning education system, as a formally important part of the welfare state. In the increasingly diverse demographic landscape of Sweden, the traditional functions of the school system had to be adapted to the actual realities that schools had to face, now. Another dimension is to establish whether, and to what extent, the various provisions are also consistent with the requirements of the Child Convention⁵. For this purpose, in 1993 was established the institution of the Children's Ombudsman⁶, a supervisory body and authority in all respects regarding children, to which more recently was added, specifically for the school environment, the Children and Pupils' Ombudsman, established on April 1st 2006, when the Act (2006:67) prohibiting discrimination and other abusive treatment of children and pupils⁷ was enacted, with the specific goal of combating bullying and harassment in schools.

⁵ after the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, the Swedish Parliament considered initially that the Swedish legislation already met the requirements of the Convention, yet it should be revised as to make sure that provisions of the national law do not contradict the provisions of the Convention. The creation of BO, *Barnombudsmannen* - The Children's Ombudsman, was however only one of the major measures and studies that followed, in order to ensure conformity of the Swedish legal system with the international requirements. A Committee Report (1995/96:SoU4) *Barn och ungdom* - 'Children and youth' analyzed however about fifty motions regarding children - see Committee Report (1996/97:SoU8).

⁶ See: SOU 1991:70 *Ombudsman för Barn och ungdom. Slutbetänkande av utredningen om Barnombudsman*. - Ombudsman for children and youth. Final report of the Committee on the Children's Ombudsman; SOU 1997:116 *Barnets bästa i främsta rummet. FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter förverkligas i Sverige. Barnkommittén*. - The best interest of the child. U.N.'s Convention on the Rights of the child becomes reality in Sweden. The Children's Committee; SOU 1997:116 *Barnets bästa – en antologi. Bilaga till Barnkommitténs huvudbetänkande*. - The best interest of the child - an anthology. Annex to the Children's Committee's Report.

⁷ Now abolished upon the adoption of a general law against all forms of discrimination, the Discrimination Act (2008:567), enacted on January 1st 2009, when the new Discrimination Ombudsman merged together all earlier anti-discrimination ombudsmen (DO – the ombudsman against ethnic and religious discrimination; JämO – the

Applicable legislation

Skollagen (1985:1100) - The Education Act, governs the early education system, from pre-school, compulsory comprehensive nine-years education (junior and intermediate level / junior high) to high-school (upper secondary school / senior high-school), as well as other parallel school forms for children with special needs and requirements i.e.: special schools⁸ and schools with special programmes for children belonging to the linguistic minorities⁹.

No difference is made between Swedish and non-Swedish children from the point of view of the right and obligation to complete at least the basic education level of nine years. Special laws add detailed regulations to each of these school levels of included in the general school system (see below). There are also provisions on education in Swedish for adult immigrants (SFI – Swedish for Immigrants). Additional provisions regarding SFI, can be found in the Ordinance (1994:895) on Swedish education for immigrants.

Attention has also been paid to some other specific problems affecting children of immigrant origin. Children in the process of immigration submitted to the effects of the Aliens' Act have received special attention, in the process of adapting this law to the requirements of the Child Convention¹⁰, in the sense of ensuring that the rights of e.g. asylum-seeking or refugee children are being observed. In some cases, an opposition between this Aliens' Act's provisions and other laws' provisions regarding the prevailing interests of a child occurred, leading in the end

equal opportunities ombudsman; HO – the ombudsman against discrimination based on functional disorders/ handicap, and HomO – the ombudsman against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation). BO – *Barnombudsmannen* /The Children's Ombudsman remained separate as their task is more general and BEO – *Barn- och elevombudsmannen* /The Children's and Pupils' Ombudsman merged together with the new *Skolinspektionen* / The School Inspection, but preserving their own specialized task. BEO Supervises together with the School inspection the 14th chapter in the Education Act, regarding abusive treatment – and together with DO, is working to counteract discrimination, abusive treatment, bullying and harassment of children and pupils.

⁸ So-called '*särskola*' for mentally impaired and '*specialskolor*' for disabled persons.

⁹ In the first place, '*sameskolan*' with integrated education for the Saami minority, according to *Sameskolförordningen* (1995:205), ch.8. The Saami have for a longer time been enjoying an implicit minority status, granting them the possibility to follow a bilingual school where their mother tongue shall be used together with Swedish as an education language. The Saami and Tornedal Finnish have unofficially been treated as (linguistic) minorities in Sweden since the 1960s. However, the official minority status of the above-mentioned groups as well as that of the Romanese has only recently been recognized as such, consequent to the signing by Sweden of the European Council's Convention on Historical Minorities' Language and the Convention for the National Minorities' Protection / SOU 1997:192 och 193 "*Steg mot en minoritetspolitik*".

¹⁰ See: SOU 1996:115 - *Barnkonventionen och utlänningslagen. Delrapport av Barnkommittén*. - The Child Convention and the Aliens' Act. Report of the Children's Committee. Also: *Prop. (1989/90:107) om godkännande av FN-konventionen om barnets rättigheter*. - Prop. on approving the U.N.Convention on the Rights of the Child; *Prop. (1992/93:173) om en Barnombudsman*.- Prop. regarding a Children's Ombudsman; *Prop. (1997/98:182) Strategi för att förverkliga FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter i Sverige*.- Strategy to realise the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in Sweden.

to consequent modification of the application of those provisions¹¹. Otherwise, a general observation is that Swedish legislation, in general, is striving to permanently adapt to these new situations and requirements that, which increases its functionality contributing to its modernization.

The application of the provisions of the Education Act is governed by special laws (see annex 2).

The Swedish educational system and inclusion challenges

The institutional framework of the Swedish education system went through subsequent transformations and reforms, as a functional adaptation resulting from evolving political trends following the development of the Swedish welfare state and democratization of the society.

2.1.1.1 Child-care and pre-school education

Problems and Issues affecting pre-school children and their level of achievement

1. Multi-lingualism in pre-school – 3 decades of mother tongue instruction in pre-school

Every fourth child growing up in Sweden has another mother tongue than Swedish, (Nordenstam, Åstedt & Olsson 2002, p.6)¹², whether s/he is born in Sweden with one or two parents of foreign origin or him/herself has immigrated together with the parents. Many children grow up in multilingual families, and the way the pre-school and school manage to meet their need to develop their competence in these various languages is extremely important for their development – as much as for their identity (Benkert, Håland & Wallin 2008)¹³. On the one hand, children growing up today have to a much higher extent than earlier in contact with persons speaking other languages than their own and having a different culture – and in many areas, linguistic and cultural diversity is quite extensive; it is not unusual to have 10-15 languages represented in the same group of children (ibid.).

¹¹ See reference to the Barrantes case in: Westin & Dingu-Kyrklund (1998) - 'Widening Gaps - Unemployment and Integration. The Swedish RIMET Report 1996, p.40. The case refers to a little girl in need of compulsory social and medical assistance, on the verge of being expelled. The provisions of the two laws, The Aliens' Act and LVU collided, which led to a legal as well as a humanitarian dilemma. It led in the end to a special modification of the Aliens' Act, giving precedence to it's provisions but at the same time creating the possibility of a compromise, i.e. the possibility of granting a temporary residence permit in such cases, until the moment when the need of compulsory assistance ceases. That implies that, after the social law ceases its immediate effect, an expulsion decision may (and in most cases probably will) be re-actualised.

¹² Nordenstam, Ulla; Åstedt, Inga-Britta & Olsson, Gunnel (2002) – Three decades of mother tongue support - about the mother tongue support in pre-school 1970-2000 /*Tre decenniers modersmålsstöd- om modersmålsstödet I förskolan 1970-2000*, Skolverket 2002.

¹³ Benkert, Susanne; Håland, Pia & Wallin, Karin (2008) – Multilingualism in pre-school: a reference- and method material/*Flerspråkighet i förskolan: ett referens- och metodmaterial*, Myndigheten för skolutveckling 2008.

In 1999, 77 percent of all children with one parent born abroad went to pre-school and daycare – which was the same proportion as for children with two Swedish-born parents. For children with two foreign-born parents, the proportion was marginally lower; the same category of children are more likely to choose municipal organizers than other forms (like family daycare), compared to other children. There was a steady increase of the proportion of children with another mother tongue from one year to another, until today. In 1980, 7 percent of the pre-school children had another mother tongue than Swedish – today (almost 30 years later), this proportion increased to 13 percent, or about doubled. The figures provided by municipalities may also be lower than the actual reality, due to the fact that not all of them provide mother tongue instruction – and consequently their interest of recording what is the children's mother tongue is also rather low. A study made by Statistics Sweden in 2002 showed that less than half of the municipalities have some routines for recording the children's mother tongue. This regards in practice not only children with immigrant background, but also children belonging to linguistic/ historic minorities. There are also important regional differences: immigrant groups tend to concentrate in larger cities – and consequently 45 percent of the children aged 1-6 have immigrant background in such large cities, compared to around 10 percent in less populated rural areas.

Research projects in language development and multi-lingualism within the pre-school¹⁴

The SPRINS-project (*Språkutveckling hos invandrabarn i Sverige* /Language development of immigrant children in Sweden) at Gothenburg university, led by *Gunnar Tingbjörn* and med *Kerstin Nauclér*, included several sub-projects regarding children in pre-school age, specifically on linguistic environment and language learning in mother tongue and multicultural groups. Based on this project, in several municipalities continued a work of development and applied results, developing methods, materials and models to be used with multicultural groups. A concrete example is the publication of a book based on the SPRINS-project and a related development project on “methodological development in several cultural pre-schools and leisure time homes in Huddinge”¹⁵ meant to be used by the personnel in the practical work: “*Kultur- och språkmöten. Om tvåspråkigt arbetssätt i förskolan/* Culture and linguistic meetings. About bilingual ways of working in the pre-school”. The resulted material was very successful and is still used by several municipalities.

The MIAF-project (*Minoritetsbarns andraspråkstillägnande i förskolan/* Minority childrens' second language appropriation in the pre-school) studied the Swedish-speaking environment's impact on minority children's bilingual development.

¹⁴ Cited from: Nordenstam, Ulla; Åstedt, Inga-Britta & Olsson, Gunnel (ibid. – see footnote above)

¹⁵ The development project: *Metodutveckling i fler kulturella förskolor och fritidshem i Huddinge* (a rather immigrant-dense Stockholm suburb).

The SKYM-project (*Språk och kultur för yngre minoritetsbarn*/ Language and culture for younger minority children) was specifically addressing refugee children, especially directed towards smaller and medium-large municipalities who had just started or were about to start accepting refugees, with the intention of addressing development- and information issues.

Best practices at work: some positive examples of creative pedagogical approach¹⁶

1. The Cognitive Approach – *Emmahuset, a school in Hammarkullen, Göteborg*

The so-called *Emmahuset* is a school in one of the major cities in Sweden, Gothenburg/*Göteborg*, in a suburb called *Hammarkullen*, known for being an immigrant-dense area (with more than half of its inhabitants with immigrant background), and for being in general an area confronted with social problems. It is also one of the so-called “million program” area, that is: a suburb dominated of blocks of flats built *en masse* during the 1960-1970s in several large cities (Stockholm also has some areas belonging to the same political program, intended to solve the dwellings shortage of the time). When built, these buildings were supposed to be modern and built from the future, dominated by concrete structures. It should be also mentioned that such areas often were already “problem-areas”, even before they also became known for a higher proportion of immigrants living there than other areas. The social problems there rather depend on pre-existing issues, such as potentially higher unemployment and lower income levels than in other areas. On the plus side, the high diversity in the area has in its turn given a special profile to the area, that has a relatively high proportion of small entrepreneurs, and hosts a few events, such as the yearly Hammarkullen carnival, every last week of May, or the Persian/ Kurdish New Year in March.

The pedagogical model used at Emmahuset School differs in some respects from traditional schooling. Teaching is based on a concept of *playful learning*, linking knowledge to the children’s individual circumstances and needs. According to the authors of the study, “here pupils learn about math and language while they bake, play and work with beads”. (p.11) The main idea is that of learning by doing, stimulating the interest and curiosity of the children and making use of their daily life experiences – placing children in the center of attention and using their desire to learn as a main motivational factor. The school organizes integrated classes for the 6-9 years old. Annelie Pilzecker, pre-school teacher, explains that:

“Learning isn’t only about books and knowing hard facts, kids may lose this type of knowledge. This way, the kids learn for life, it’s all about learning by doing, this is the kind of knowledge that they will keep for life” (ibid.)

Ingelin Nilsson, teacher in the compulsory school, agrees with her colleague Annelie and adds:

“We believe that we learn through our senses. We endeavour to work with the large picture and believe that all individual development comes from this source. Social development, emotional training, motoric development and the acquisition of knowledge, it’s all part of the large picture.” (ibid).

2. Hammarbyskolan – *importance of documentation as a means of facilitating every child’s development*

¹⁶ Following examples referred to in this section are cited from a report presented in 2006 by the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement (*Myndigheten för skolutveckling*): Lumholdt, Helene & Klasén McGrath, Monica(2006) - The Swedish pre-school class – one of a kind,/*Förskoleklassen – i en klass för sig*, Swedish National Agency for School Improvement/ *Myndigheten för skolutveckling*, 2006.

Inspired by the pre-schools in the Italian Reggio Emilia, the Hammarby¹⁷ school in Stockholm has applied a through documentation model since their first Reggio Emilia project in 1993. The main characteristics of the model are combining playful learning with a unique type of documentation the work and progress in pre-school through paintings, sketches, photographs and film. Even though the documentation in itself is time-consuming – yet manageable with the use of modern technology, according to the pedagogues applying the model (such as Pia Eriksson), the benefits justify it. The children provide a central source of documentation that is literally covering the environment: walls, lamps, ceiling get covered with artifacts. The most important feature with the model is providing a starting point for further learning – and by that a solid ground for progress for the individual progress of children and the school alike.

In the child-care system, other problems that confront the recreational activities existence and quality are also the degree of qualification of the staff involved. In the municipalities' régime, 60 percent of the staff involved has university-level pedagogical qualifications; within the private entities offering similar services, only 34 percent of the staff reaches the same level of qualification. The result of these deficiencies is multifold, for parents, children, and the society at large. Not only the situation of the parents becomes really difficult at times, threatening their career and perhaps even increasing their risk for unemployment, but that jeopardizes the development of the children, social and otherwise. Children deprived of that part of their social life while other children in their proximity have access to it risk of becoming isolated, outsiders of their own natural network, with all risks that may involve for their development in a time of their life they are increasingly dependent on their contacts with other children of the same age.

Other consequences of the reform, according to the evaluation report¹⁸ are:

- Increased decentralization, but also increased municipal supervision and control;
- Certain achievements in creating premises for an equivalent pre-school even for children in need of special support, but also deficiencies in actually providing an appropriate level of service, mostly due to insufficient allocation of resources¹⁹.

NB: Some municipalities allot compensatory measures or alike; Two-thirds of these have *supplemental-based resources* for children in need of special support, while only 20 percent of the

¹⁷ Name of a Stockholm suburb

¹⁸ Swedish National Agency for Education /Skolverket (2008) *Tio år efter förskolereformen. Nationell utvärdering av förskolan*. Report 318 - Ten years after the pre-school reform/ A national evaluation of the Swedish pre-school. Also: SKL (2009) – *Den nya förskolan – med kvalitet i fokus*;

¹⁹ According to the municipal survey, nearly three-fourths of the municipalities have carried out follow-ups for children in need of special support in the last five years. *Only 40 percent of the respondents assess that the resources are sufficient* (my Italics), while a larger percentage (75 percent), believe that [despite that], the efforts for children in need of support are effective. (ibid.)

municipalities allocate supplemental resources based on socio-economic factors – but on the average, that amounts to 4-5 percent of their total budget, and up to 10 percent in larger urban areas.

- There are major similarities between the results of the first and those of the second evaluation as to the often too large size of children's groups, still related to economic priorities.

“Compared with five years ago, today there is a larger percentage of municipalities that totally lack standards or guidelines for the size of children's groups – 51 percent compared with 40 percent five years ago. The municipalities' governance over the size of children's groups has also decreased to a certain extent. The average group size has decreased somewhat since the previous evaluation, largely due to [an increase in] the percentage of part-time children. The “ceiling” varies in different municipalities, and for the number of children in different age groups with approximately 5 children.”²⁰

Comparatively increased awareness on assessment of the individual child's development, individual development plans, IUPs (*individuella utvecklingsplaner*) was extensively introduced despite a lack of [legal] requirements to do so. One third of the municipalities developed IUP content templates (most common on children's social and language development), but case studies showed difficulties in using them in pre-school, or as joint templates for school and pre-school²¹.

- “**Narrowing the Curriculum?**”: Compared with the previous evaluation, *language and language development is prioritized* to a considerably larger extent in school plans, especially in municipalities in major urban areas. Other prioritized areas in most municipalities are: issues regarding fundamental norms and values (*värdegrundfrågor*) and pedagogical documentation, as well as gender issues and individual development plans (see above). Cooperation with the parents is much more often prioritized in large cities areas, and in nine municipalities out of ten, means meant to cover costs for competence development of the staff are directly shared by the pre-school units who are to use them – whether it is the entire personnel, a team or just a person. Balancing between prioritizing and broader goals proves complex and with somewhat contradictory results.

In conclusion, there is a certain co-ordination between pre-school and school, in common councils at municipal administrative level, in almost all municipalities. A main change compared to previous years is prioritizing language development and gender issues in school plans. Personal commitment, competence development and experience are main factors of success. Research shows also that the size of the groups is important not only for the children's development but also for the personnel.²²

2.1.1.2 Confessional Schools

²⁰ *ibid.* (English version), p.23.

²¹ See also OECD's report: “Starting Strong II” for comparative aspects.

²² Skolverket (2003) *Gruppstorlekar och personaltäthet i förskola, förskoleklass och fritidshem*. Rapport 237. Stockholm: Skolverket; see also: Asplund Carlsson, M., Pramling Samuelsson, I. & Kärrby, G. (2001)

According to art.12 of the Child Convention, children should enjoy the same right to compulsory education, also in point of quality and implicitly providing equal opportunities of (further) access.

In Lpfö98, regulating the pre-school content and curriculum, there is no explicit demand that the pre-school activity should be non-confessional under the chapter about values and the pre-school's assignment. However, there is a statement regarding the right of all parents to be able to send their children to pre-school, reassured that the children are not going to get a one-sided, narrow-minded or biased view, likely to influence them towards one or another opinion.

In Lpo94, under the similar chapter on values and assignment, the educational process in school shall be secularized, non-confessional, reassuring parents that their children are not going to be influenced one way or another with regard to their opinions, while Lpf94 states that the educational process shall be totally non-confessional, and values are discussed, than it should always be clear who stands for the stated opinion.

As this suggests, schools with a confessional profile are by all means a more special category of independent schools. They can address various religious creeds (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, etc.).

As a lead in a government assignment to take a closer look at independent schools addressing a delimited group within the Swedish society, the National Agency for Education carried out a study on confessional, ethnic and language-focused profiles in independent schools in 1997 (Skolverket, 1997)²³. According to the study, there are two main reasons for parents to choose such a school. One is that the municipal school out of some reasons is not considered on the level. The other one was an argument used by parents having their children in Muslim or Arabic schools²⁴, and that was the need they felt to ensure a safe school environment for them. Apart from that, they also wanted their children to get knowledge about their origin and culture, which was difficult to receive within the framework of the municipal school. According to the parents, the municipal school was unable to provide a correct image of Islam, the discipline was inexistent, and the instruction methodology lacked the traditional, old-fashioned teaching *ex-cathedra*, proper upbringing and moral standards. Pupils attending municipal schools' education were considered as lacking respect for adults, while the parents also dreaded the presence of drugs and alcohol. An important issue was also that the parents considered that there were too many children with immigrant background in the municipal schools. To all this, they added that the municipal schools had difficulties in following practical rules about clothing, food, prayer time and others, and that is was generally speaking too secularized. These opinions are

²³ Skolverket (1997) "Children between inheritance and future: Confessional, ethnic and language profile in a segregation perspective" / *Barn mellan arv och framtid: Konfessionella, etniska och språkligt inriktade skolor i ett segregationsperspektiv*. Skolverket 1997, Dnr 97:810.

²⁴ In the same report, the authors had also concluded that the (same) Muslim or Arabic schools were those who displayed "the most evident problem-profile" (p.4).

confirmed as such by discussions the author of this study herself had during a number of interviews with members of Muslim communities in the Stockholm-area (in 2008-2009), who expressed very similar opinions and motivations for their choice to send their children to independent schools with Islamic/confessional alternatively Arabic profile.

There are 68 schools with a confessional profile that were approved during the school-year 2008-2009 (according to principles established after the 2006 –year reform). Most of these school are Christian (various profiles), 8 are Islamic/Muslim/Arabic language and culture, 3 Jewish (of which one with Montessori profile) (according to information from the National .

In 2003, a TV-review program specialized in social investigations of occurrences of general interest²⁵, often with a hidden camera (as in this case), presented a critical program revealing that insulting treatment, physical and mental abuse, etc., occurred in some independent school visited – serious issues that, once confirmed, may well lead to their permit being withdrawn. A first broadcasting showed personnel from nine Muslim/Arabic schools – mainly rectors, who in certain cases expressed controversial opinions indicating that they showed too much tolerance for upbringing methods used against pupils of the respective schools – such as physical punishments (explicitly prohibited by the Swedish law), and chose to ignore their obligation of reporting cases when children were likely to have been exposed to such treatments (equally not acceptable according to Swedish law) to the Social authorities. The broadcasting started a rather lively debate of pros and cons echoing over the Mass Media. Various instances felt obliged to react, including the National Agency for Education, who initiated controls that should check up the presented facts, as well as politically tainted individuals and organizations, etc. The press published critical articles about the presented facts²⁶, engaging various voices in discussion, on both sides. The inspections initiated by the National Agency of Education devoted special attention to the situation of the pupils and their eventual exposure to bad treatment – as well as investigating whether the school staff (rectors, etc.) were ignoring their obligation to disclose eventual risks pupils could be exposed to, to the Social authorities, according to the legal provisions in force. An interesting effect – that also provoked reactions – was that the signaled conditions in the Muslims schools lead to critical expectations and demands of inclusion among the inspected ones Christian

²⁵ *Dokument inifrån* – “Document from the inside”

²⁶ For instance: DN, 08.05.2003 (article by Haideh Daragahi) or DN ,10.05.2003 “*Friskolor i fritt fall*”/ Independent schools in free-fall, whose author considers among others that “some independent schools made segregation their business idea”. Also DN 15.05.2003 “*Sanningen om friskolorna*”/ The truth about independent schools

confessional schools (doubts were expressed in a discussion group suspecting that the latter may have even more problems of the kind).

Figure 1. Independent confessional schools and their profile, 2002-2003/4

Direction	Profile	Number of schools 2003/2004	Number of pupils Autumn Term 2002 Pre-school classes	Number of pupils Autumn Term 2002 Primary school
Confessional	Islamic	10	123	860
Confessional	Jewish	3	25	177
Confessional	Christian	56*	540	5 391
Language/ ethnical	Arabic	7**	108	601
General	Islamic	1	-	90
General	Language	3**	40	289
General	General values	1	-	11
Total		80	836	7 419

* varav två skolor som startat höstterminen 2003

** varav en skola som startat höstterminen 2003

Source: Inspektion av fristående skolor med konfessionell inriktning eller motsvarande, Skolverket 2004

A collection of inspection decisions regarding 473 independent schools, of which 44 confessional, shows that confessional schools are seldom criticized for the quality of the education they provide. Claes-Göran Aggebo, responsible for the inspection, stated that it doesn't happen so often that confessional schools display a lack of comprehensive, all-round perspective and objectivity, there is a rather limited amount of schools that may be concerned. The material shows that, as a group, confessional schools have no more, no less problems than other types of independent schools. Twenty of them had got no critical comments at all. A Christian school closed down and a Jewish school appealed the pending closing decision taken, and the issue was still to be decided by a judicial court.

The real question may be in the end to determine what would actually be best for the children, which is the best solution for the pupils themselves – if any, and who knows best what is best for them: is it the parents, the society, the school? What is the best way of ensuring genuine equal opportunities for them in the education system? Is there any given answer to any of these questions? ? Opinions are as yet divided – depending who is asking the questions and who is answering. Representatives of the confessional schools themselves – e.g. of the Islamic schools, but not only²⁷, as well as parents choosing to send their children to such a school, tend to consider this as what one could call an opportunity for exclusive inclusion – by creating the

²⁷ Interview reports

possibility for the children and their families to feel equally entitled to their culture, religion, traditional values and even to feel that they benefit from equal opportunities in education. Outsiders, especially persons with less tolerant disposition – including the more extreme right wing in politics²⁸, may rather consider the occurrence of such schools as “proof” of not being willing to “integrate” – or even worse, as a possible security threat. Most people have though a rather neutral attitude, without excluding various degrees of mistrust (which might even include a certain “preventive” attention from the national security services). As to the results, indications so far – considering various information sources, including inspection material, are a bit contradictory. There are some concerns that such schools, addressing a certain immigrant group, may have a “segregational effect” (SOU 1995:109 p 47; Borevi & Strömblad, SOU 2004:33, p.15, Skolverket 1997²⁹). As an example is mentioned the appeal of the municipality in Örebro against the acceptance by the School Board of the Islamic *Al Elown Allslamia school*, whose activity might negatively influence the children’s chances to integration, as it minimised the natural contact with the Swedish language and culture. The main question remains which option may ensure better opportunities for pupils with immigrant background to appropriate a competitive level of proficiency in Swedish. There is still an on-going debate about the pros and cons of accepting or not confessional schools. There is more discussion now about leaving a dialogue open, while in some cases, the respective schools are making efforts to present themselves as equivalent schools, seeking solutions of their own in controversial issues. In an article published in DN (one of the major morning newspapers in Sweden), in March 2008, the rector of the Al-Azhar school in Bromma – Stockholm (an elementary school with 460 pupils) was telling the readers that everybody can learn to swim in the school, as boys and girls are placed in different groups. As to that part of the curriculum that should include sexual issues, it is said that the children are taught beginning from the fourth class “whatever is appropriate considering their age”, sometimes in groups that may be even smaller than four pupils. On the one hand, there is a probability that there may be some parts of the activity in some confessional schools that may need closer monitoring, but otherwise, there is no real evidence that confessional schools would have more particular problems than other schools, independent or municipal. Probably, additional clarifications as to the specificity and the way of functioning of such schools, especially to ensure beyond any doubt that all pupils are treated according to the rules, that they are provided equal opportunities, and proper quality instruction.

2.1.1.3 *Special Schools (Särskolor) – Framework for children and adults*

Special schools are not part of ‘mainstream education’, whereas private schools and minority language schools should be treated as belonging to ‘mainstream education’ – they are financed by the state and parents may chose the school of their choice, whereas placement in special schools depends on medical examination etc.

²⁸ which is, however, a clear minority, with minimum (yet slightly growing) representation e.g. *Sverigedemokraterna* – The Swedish Democrats, a quite small ultra-nationalistic party with an active anti-Islamic blogg (about 3 percent in the polls – the threshold to be admitted in the Parliament is minimum 4 percent).

²⁹ Skolverket (1997) /Bolin, Staffan & Persson, Sofia – *Barn mellan arv och framtid: Konfessionella, etniska och språklig inriktade skolor i en segregationsperspektiv*/Children between heritage and future; Schools with a confessional, ethnic and language profile in a segregationist perspective.

2.1.1.4 From special school to adaptive adult education

If a person still did not achieve the aims by the time (s)he filled 20, officially lives in the country and has the prerequisites to achieve the educational goals, there is the possibility to continue within the adult education system, within the adult special education program, *sär vux* according to the aims formulated in SKOLFS 1994:27. If the student has another mother tongue than Swedish, then the education may be provided in the student's own language, but in that case including additional training in Swedish, according to the appropriate provisions in the School Act (SFS 1985:1100, ch.12 §§ 2a-2d), and the special adult school ordinance, *Sär vuxförordningen* (SFS 1994:1463). The rules for *sär vux* changed on January 1st 2007³⁰ (in line with the general changes within the Swedish school system lately), and the amended curriculum and grading criteria to be used (replacing those applied since 1994) started being used on July 1st 2008. Beyond *sär vux*, covering the same basic subjects as the special school, in an individualized form, there is also a training school – *träningsskolan*, whose curriculum only covers five subjects: esthetic activity, communication, motorics (movement), everyday activity and reality apprehension (*verklighetsuppfattning*), that is, activities whose final aim is to improve the students' possibility to comprehend, interpret and be able to integrate within the surrounding reality in a meaningful way.

2.1.1.5 Between intentions and results – the critical situation of the Roma children

It is difficult to estimate the number of persons of Roma origin. The official figures usually amount to 15000-20000 plus at least additionally 20000 travelers³¹. The Roma minority has constantly been the most marginalized of Europe's minorities. It took many years for its representatives to be acknowledged, officially, as a distinctive if non-homogenous group with a distinctive language, culture and traditions, who after ages of systematic oppressions finally got a confirmation of the validity of its human rights. Consequently, after its official recognition in 2000, the Roma minority were also granted the necessary rights to enable them to preserve, develop and transmit further its language and its culture. A main instrument for the purpose is access to education – even more, as a recognized minority, the right to instruction in their own language. However, difficulties in achieving this goal proved to be of proportions. The situation of Romani children in school is characterized by difficulties,

³⁰ *Kursplaner for grundläggande sär vux*, Skolverket 2008.

³¹ According to other opinions, e.g. Sonny Jenfjord, representative of the of the Council of National Organization of the Traveler People, this group should amount to around 100 000 persons (p.12).

harassment, and discrimination – which occur both in Swedish pre-schools and in schools. One of the main difficulties in achieving the task at hand proved to be that of finding possibilities to ensure access to mother tongue instruction in Romani. The situation is obviously critical in more than one way. Numerous reports³² – articles, studies, other materials, showed repeatedly the extremely difficult situation members of the Roma minority have to face. Prejudice, discrimination, systematic harassment, bullying are everyday occurrences for Roma children – and their parents. Exclusion, lack of resources and sufficient support are other equally serious problems members of this diverse minority are subjected to.

In 2007, the National Agency for Education was commissioned by the Swedish government to study the situation of the Roma children in school and the particular problems they are confronted with³³. The study was extensive and based on empirical material/ direct contacts with representatives of the Roma, teachers, parents, rectors, etc., in school situated in various parts of Sweden (Stockholm, *Göteborg/ Gothenberg*, Malmö, Linköping and Norrköping), as well as a number of previous studies and materials issued by various instances during several years time. Apart from the local Roma, there are also a number of newcomers emigrating from e.g. former Yugoslavia. There is a variation in the school situation, and there are also positive developments. Many of the interviewed pupils have expressed their desire to continue their studies in secondary education (high-school), however there was still a dominant image of pupils missing classes, many leave primary school without having obtained pass marks that should enable them to graduate and go further with their education – and few Roma children actually continue their study in higher secondary schools. Most support they receive is to hire Roma assistants to help Roma school children, which makes the contact between home and school easier, and the experience was a positive one. Unfortunately, many of these measures are mostly temporary, and the need would rather require long-term measures. Moreover, few of the pupils study their mother tongue, which does not seem to be about to change. The motivation is partly that they are avoiding mentioning that they are Roma, supposedly to avoid negative discriminatory treatment – presuming they are at all aware of their own rights. Another reason is prioritizing Swedish, as they also have quite deficient knowledge in this

³² Some examples: the weekly *Arbetaren* Nr. 50, 2008: "Romska barn missgynnas fortfarande" (E.Fredriksson); *Sydsvenskan/Expressen*, 27.10.2008: "Mer romsk personal i skolorna efterfrågas" (B-M Bergström); several articles reproduced on <http://www.nyhetsportalen.se/r1276072.html> : "Skolbarnen hålls hemma" (SvT Gävle & Dalarna); "Hemma från skolan i ett år" (Hallands Nyheter); "Elever hålls hemma från skolan" (Hallands Nyheter), DN 13.11.2008: "Skolan sviker de romska barnen" (L. Bjurwald); *Kvällsposten/Expressen*: "Få romska barn går i skolan i Malmö" (even report from Malmö city); <http://www.nyhetsportalen.se/r1276072.html> 08.01.2007 "Romer som vill utbilda sig stöttas dåligt" (G. Österlund), etc.

³³ Skolverket: "*Romer i skolan - en fördjupad studie*"/ The Roma in school – a study in depth, Rapport 292, 2007.

language. A particular difficulty is the very variety of the Roma culture, which makes it even more difficult to manage to provide teachers speaking not only Romani, but also the actual “right” dialect required. Harassment and bullying occurs but didn’t seem to pose too many problems in the visited schools – but rather, a deeply rooted feeling of being discriminated and even confronted with racist manifestations on various occasions, (90 percent of those questioned perceived Sweden as “a racist land who displays enmity towards the Roma”. A school leader’s reporting stated that Roma are considered to be lowest in status among pupils, and in another school, the rector noted that other parents would withdraw their children from the schools where there were many Roma. Among the conclusions and prospective solutions, were mentioned:

- Municipalities need to intensify their efforts to find viable, attractive solutions that should encourage parents to make use of the pre-school and initiate a cooperation with the parents for the purpose;
- Better planning of the special measures directed to Roma children, that need to be put into practice with continuity and tenaciously; Teaching assistants proved to be useful, but they require guiding and further education themselves;
- Create a safe environment for the Roma children in schools, in cooperation with the parents, is of fundamental importance to ensure their actual schooling. The right to education needs to be closely followed by the National Education Board – who is to follow up [application of] the Law prohibiting discrimination and harassment based on ethnic belonging.
- Develop appropriate routines to enforce the right and obligation to education – including seeking the pupils supposed to participate and investigate the reasons for absence (especially if prolonged and unmotivated), for which purpose cooperation between several authorities should be considered.
- Better information and statistics related to mother tongue education, including better documentation of the varieties of Romani that occur (work already on-going at the time), with the goal of improving actual access to mother-tongue education, encouraging the Roma pupils to make more extensive use of the possibility.
- This also requires better education alternatives for adults, including validation of courses and alternatives to finance the studies. Long-distance study alternatives also need to be developed.
- Local integrated cooperation between authorities and Roma organizations needs to be developed on a local plan to counteract phenomena of exclusion, improve equality of treatment and better the schooling/ frequency.

Bilingualism should be encouraged, and access to mother tongue instruction should also continue in higher secondary schools (whether municipal or private), within the given legal framework. An important decision for the Roma children and pupils was taken in connection to the recognition of Romani as a minority language³⁴. The institute for languages and popular memory (*Institutet för språk och folkminnen*), founded on July 1st 2006, is going to work for the preservation and development of the minority languages as well as dialects of Swedish, etc. The work is also to lead to dictionaries in various Romani dialects and academic work to take place on university level, including an introduction course in Roma culture, history, etc.

In a 2008 Report, The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination³⁵ described (again) the extremely difficult situation Roma children and parents are still subjected to. Because of intensive harassment in school, Roma parents find no better strategy to solve the problem than to keep, still, their children home instead of sending them to school – a fact often interpreted as unwillingness to send them to school. In the debate however, parents made the point that this is not the case, but rather an extreme measure to an extremely dramatic situation. The development of the situation is to be closely followed by both authorities and interesees. Hopefully, the next state-of-the-art evaluation of their situation is going to show improvement.

2.1.1.6 *Early school leavers in compulsory schools*

At the beginning of 2006, several press articles reacting on a report of the National Agency for Education were noting a four times increase in early school leavers in compulsory school in ten years. Statistically, 1500 pupils in the 9th grade (the last year of compulsory school before higher secondary education) lacked pass-level grades – and further 600 pupils had hardly reached pass-level in one subject only. Many of those not having met the required standards continue – but many in practice remain school-leavers, despite the fact that there is a compulsory school level. Among those having lowest results, the proportion of girls has increased from 40 to 45 percent in five years. ? The pupils mentioned above are only those “about to graduate” primary school, the 9-graders. The compulsory school level covers grades

³⁴ Proposition 2005/06:2 “*Bästa språket – en samlad svensk språkpolitik*”/ The best language – an integrated Swedish linguistic policy, consequent to the ratification of the European Council minority languages Convention.

³⁵ Since January 1st 2009, simply DO – The ombudsman against discrimination/The discrimination ombudsman. The report is called: “*Diskriminering av nationella minoriteter inom utbildningsväsendet*”/ Discrimination of national minorities within the [Swedish] education system.

1-9 (primary and similar to lower secondary school, ISCED 1 and 2(a)). A recent article³⁶ taking up the subject of ranking and results of schools in Stockholm stated that “*every fourth student in Stockholm finishes the compulsory school without having achieved the minimum requirements for graduation*”. Considering the results obtained in different areas of Stockholm, differences become not only obvious, but also impossible to dissociate from factors as social class/status and segregation in housing as negative influences. If we only look at the ranking, the best four schools are placed in well-off areas, dominantly “white” Swedish in point of population structure and with average high income levels. Apart from great results, they seem to have in common being placed in well-off areas, when you can expect the average income to be rather high (*Fredrikshovs slottskola, Adolf Fredrik musikklasser, Äppelviksskolan*, etc.). First on the list, with maximum points (100/100), there must be an independent school, - the name “*Kulturskolan Raketen*” is until now totally unknown to me. The French School, another “Independent” is also, is also on the A-list. A certain surprise is though to see the last on the Lucky list, “*Kunskapskolan Tyresö*” (approx. “The Knowledge School in Tyresö”), which is really far from all others, but a 93 /100 average result. The idea of ranking is defended with the motivation that this is a needed to know where the resources are needed as reparative measures for bad performance. Authorities and politicians express their more or less biased opinions. On the loser’s list it is easy to recognize all the names from the many reports and discussions about immigrant integration and segregation in housing, language-command deficiencies, low average incomes. An absolute majority are from the immigrant-dense so-called “million [houses] program” of the 1970’s, most often associated with some sort of social problems, high levels of unemployment, etc. Their average results are between 30-56/100. In the last school on the list only 3 out of every 10 reach the minimum-level required. The new “bad” reputation adds to the old “bad” reputation, but a well-know gap of resources versus actual needs should also be noted. “Common knowledge” about this school – as about most others on the same list, is that a large majority of the students going there have immigrant background. Within the worn-down school –area, there are persons speaking perhaps around a hundred different languages, but extremely few (if any) have Swedish as a mother tongue. In practice, that means that pupils of these schools most often desperately need proper, individualized, language training. Most

³⁶ DN 04.03.2009 – “*Stockholms skolor långt ifrån ’världsklass’*” – Stockholm Schools far from “World Class”. (see also: DN 2006-03-24 – Torbjörn Terfelt: Avhopp från skolan har fördubblats på tio år – Drop-out from school doubled in 10 years; / (Skolverket 2007 – Varför hoppade du av? En studie av orsakerna till att ungdomar byter studieriktning eller hoppar av gymnasiet/ Why have you dropped out [from school]? A study on the reasons why youngsters switch study direction or drop out higher secondary school. Fritzes)

probably, they hardly ever have a chance to hear genuine Swedish spoken in a way closer to its literary form, but even when they use Swedish as a local *lingua franca* on the school premises, they only hear an exuberant mixture of funny accents, that even got a name: “Rinkeby-Swedish” (see the Rinkeby school as third on the list – of the last!). But the position of the very well-known school in Rinkeby, should be very carefully considered. During the years, the school has also displayed surprisingly good progress, and beyond its very challenging situation due to its extreme ethnic diversity, there are also many dedicated teachers making efforts to meet that challenge to the best of their capacities.

2.1.1.7 The illustrative case of the school in Rinkeby (immigrant-dense Stockholm suburb)

The school in *Rinkeby* is a controversial school, illustrative for quite a number of schools with a very diverse structure of students. In October 2008, in the same daily newspaper DN mentioned above were published a series of articles, some rather extensive, about a number of contrasts associated with this, in its way, famous school. It started with a protest meeting of parents challenging the school’s decision sometimes back to invest resources in an elite class formed of a limited number of very gifted children.

The elite investment mentioned refers to an elite class formed of some of the best students, who benefitted among others from the teaching of a by now famous math teacher, Stavros Louca.³⁷ The investment rendered the participants not only top grades in math, but also in all other subjects, core- and others alike. However, no similar help was awarded the other four parallel classes of 9-graders. Their results: 64 percent had failed one of the core subjects, 84 percent had failed in natural science subjects (including math), 54 percent had failed in social science subjects. The article mentions also that, no later than 2006, the rector Börje Ehrstrand had been awarded a special price rewarding contributions in increasing knowledge in school. Earlier in 2008, two of the school’s 8-graders won the first prize in a national competition organized by the National Centre for Mathematics and the Royal Academy of Sciences. This kind of success builds on an early start in personal commitment, already when pupils reach the 5th grade, as only those obtaining a pass-grade in the national tests get a chance to go in the elite class in junior high.

³⁷ Teacher who became famous among others for his involvement in a very popular reality TV-series dedicated to a school class, helped through common dedication, to overcome their initial limitations to reach remarkable levels of accomplishment at the end of the road.

Another one of the many articles published in DN within approx a week, was a follow-up related to the parents' protests, and their list of demands for repairing the damages. "No more compromises ... it is a shame that children who need help don't get it". The content is:

- A special teacher from the outside shall evaluate the children's knowledge and needs, making an individual action plan for each and every pupil;
- The classes should be divided in smaller groups, and the teaching shall be adapted to the various level of knowledge of the pupils
- A last demand was that the teaching level should be "equivalent to that in a Swedish class on *Lidingö* (a fairly fashionable insular municipality within the greater Stockholm district).

The result was that the rector Börje Ehrstrand accepted unconditionally the parents' all demands, and promised to turn everything in the right direction.

The first three articles mentioned above should be contextualized. The rector of the Rinkeby School has become a both familiar and controversial figure while devoting himself to the development of the school he has been leading for many years, in a struggle to change the negative connotations associated with it, to at times, a trademark of success under adverse conditions. The characteristic of the school is that it is placed in one of the most immigrant-dense areas of Stockholm, associated partly with colourful diversity – which the area is particularly associated with, but also with a range of more or less specific issues, mostly socio-economic in nature actually, even though there is a constant tendency to rather relate them to "immigrant integration" issues. In short, some of the main characteristics are:

- segregation in housing (there are hardly any native Swedes living in the area, but there is a great ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity – is it very usual to refer to "more than 100 languages spoken in the area")
- high levels of unemployment (very high among e.g. certain groups of African origin, but there is variation among different groups;
- low(er) income levels (than the average in other areas); in many cases, that generates a constant dependency on welfare for the most disadvantaged
- increased social fragmentation, in many cases likely to lead to exclusionary mechanisms
- general tensions may put additional strain on generational cleavages, especially for persons /groups originating from cultures that feel very remote from the Swedish culture and sometimes, behavioural patterns.

Getting back to the issues raised by the *Rinkeby* school and its rector, despite its many problems, the school went in time from a school with basically bad to hopeless reputation at times, where excessive levels of diversity rather created problems, of which the most important remains that of language acquisition in an environment where native speakers are

more than scarce. I would daresay that, despite the many problems of many successive generations with a far too extensive number of pupils who did not make it on an acceptable level, it should not be ignored the importance of managing to support at least a few, whose successful development – without compensating for the massive failure of others – have the important contributions in fostering hope. The very fact that pupils with immigrant background from a formerly obscure low-means segregated school, could compete and even win in competition with native pupils from high-income areas, may play an extremely important role for others, who can get the encouragement they require to feel that they too, have a chance of success in this country, even in competition with native-speakers. From this point of view, the rector of the school has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere of hope, even though strongly limited by the high level of poor, substandard performance, whose importance should never be minimized. It is however also a concrete fact that that is not unrelated to the constant number of pupils who still need to begin with learning the language, in a school that still lacks the presence of native speakers, and the means necessary to offer that kind of individualized attention and instruction required to overcome, fast enough, barriers of communication – and in time, scholarly barriers.

Considering the context, it is safe to draw the conclusion that what reference is made to, is not the school as such – not even its status. What the other schools mentioned as a comparison term in not only their failure to help their pupils meet minimum standards, their chronic history of under-achievement – but rather, the reasons behind that. Practically all school mentioned as a comparison term are schools with a higher majority of immigrant children, whose possibilities to meet a proper level of competence in Swedish remain rather minimal, as long as their contact with the Swedish speaking world around them remains limited, and somehow sporadic. The Rinkeby School, with its successes and failures, is only a more vivid example of a much more spread phenomenon thereof.

3 Early school leaving – Abandoning studies from upper secondary education

According to a report by Statistics Sweden³⁸, every 5th student who had started high-school studies in the autumn term 2000 has not finished his/her studies more than six years later, i.e. more than 22 000 out of 99 000 students who started studying still has not finished their secondary education and had not taken their high-school diploma by not fulfilling (parts of) the required program. The figure is even higher when those going the so-called individual programs are concerned, reaching there up to 74 percent early school leavers. As main reasons declared are school tiredness (40 percent) and issues related to sickness or alike. The phenomenon seems to affect more males than females (one in four men, and one in five women interrupted their studies. In the similar study by the Education Department (*Skolverket*), the causes for early school leaving were more complex. Apart from health problems, family issues (divorce of the parents, moving to another place and school, sickness and death in the family) are most often named, even though according to the authors of the study, these aspects “have not broken down anybody” but rather had a strengthening function, challenging the students to find their own survival strategies. At the other end, sporting had a strengthening effect, giving meaning and purpose to some of the interviewees – which might as well be a compensatory effect for the difficulties encountered. The same study indicates the great importance of a participatory engagement by parents and the closest social environment: (enlarged) family, friends – boy- & and girlfriends included, neighbours, school staff). However, with some exceptions showing appreciation of adults (teachers included) in schools, a majority of the respondents did not describe their experience in contact with school adults as less than positive. Parents often did not challenge their children’s decision of not fulfilling their studies but rather accepted their decision, which can be puzzling for the children. A possible explanation for the parents’ lack of engagement in such cases can be the parents’ low level of education and the lack of study tradition in the family. Other motivations perceived by the students, the long days with insufficient stimuli in school contribute to fatigue, and lack of pro-active attempts to change the school environment also make it difficult for them, while eventual help comes often too late. However, contacts with the working life seem constantly positive, especially if persons in leading positions showed

³⁸ SCB – Welfare/ *Välfärd* Nr. 1, 2008. See also: SCB/ Statistics Sweden : 2007:4 – *Tema: Utbildning. Ungdomar utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning*/Theme: Education. Youth without a completed upper secondary education; SCB 2007:01 *Sambandet mellan utbildning och yrke*/ The link between education and profession; SCB/ Statistics Sweden 2007:02 *Vuxnas deltagande i utbildning*/ Participation of adults in education; SCB/ Statistics Sweden 2007:03 *Kvinnor och män i välfärdsstatistiken – några exempel*/ Women and men in welfare statistics; SCB/ Statistics Sweden, 2006:01 *Etablering på arbetsmarknaden tre år efter gymnasieskolan*/ Establishment in the labour market three years after [finishing] higher secondary education

appreciation towards the youth – which contributes to building-up their self-reliance and self-respect. Despite that though, the risk for unemployment remains higher among early-leavers.

Even more negative is the trend of abandon studies: out of the 153 000 students, who started their upper secondary education in 2007, there were 10 000 who did not continue their studies in autumn 2008. Among these, children with immigrant background are overrepresented; a whole 12 percent of these students are interrupting their studies for a shorter or longer period of time, while the corresponding figures for students with Swedish background reach only 5 percent (according to data from the National Agency for Higher Education).

Early school-leavers in upper secondary school (*gymnasiet*)

Things don't look much better for pupils aspiring to continue their upper secondary education in high-school (*gymnasiet*): the same SCB study mentioned above³⁹ states that in Spring term 2008, the proportion of pupils qualified to continue their studies on high-school level was the lowest in ten years: only 88.9 percent of the to-be graduates were able to continue their studies on higher secondary level since 1998 (2007 there were 89.1 percent). It's mainly the girls' results that lower the total score, who went down to 89.9 percent score from 90.4 the previous year (2007); for the boys, results remained unchanged; 87.9 percent. The subject with lower results was maths (7.2 percent of the girls and 7.7 percent of the boys didn't get a pass grade). As main reasons declared are school tiredness (40 percent) and issues related to sickness or alike. The phenomenon seems to affect more males than females (one in four men, and one in five women interrupted their studies. In the similar study by the Education Department (*Skolverket*), the causes for early school leaving were more complex. Apart from health problems, family issues (divorce of the parents, moving to another place and school, sickness and death in the family) are most often named, even though according to the authors of the study, these aspects "have not broken down anybody" but rather had a strengthening function, challenging the students to find their own survival strategies. At the other end, sporting had a strengthening effect, giving meaning and purpose to some of the interviewees – which might as well be a compensatory effect for the difficulties encountered.

³⁹ (ibid.) SCB - Valfärd 2008

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Number of Students who completed or not some high-school program*, in percent, 2007⁴⁰
Andelen som fullföljt respektive inte fullföljt något program. Procent, 2007

	<i>S-NT</i>	<i>S-SV</i>	<i>Y-NT</i>	<i>Y-Öv</i>	<i>Spec</i>	<i>Ind</i>
Completed the initial program <i>Fullföljt påbörjad kategori</i>	76	76	68	69	35	2
Completed within another program <i>Fullföljt inom annan program</i>	5	4	3	4	44	4
Not completed within any program <i>Ej fullföljt inom någon</i>	19	20	28	27	21	94
Total/ Summa	100	100	100	100	100	100

- * 1. Natural science and technical program/ *Naturvetenskapliga och tekniska programmet/ (S-NT)*
- 2. Social sciences program/ *Samhällsvetenskapliga programmet/ (S-SV)*
- 3. Vocational training technical program; Constructions, Electricity, Power/Energy-, (Motor) Vehicles, etc.
/Yrkesinriktade tekniska program, Bygg-, El-, Energi-, Fordon m.fl. (Y-NT)
- 4. Other vocationally oriented programs; Children and leisure-time activities; Hotel-related; Nursing, etc.
Övriga yrkesinriktade program, Barn- och fritid, Hotell-, Omvårdnad m.fl. (Y-Öv)
- 5. Specially designed programs/ *Specialutformade program*
- 6. The individual program (special prep-program for those not fulfilling conditions to follow a regular program)/
Individuella programmet.

Source: A. Svensson – Pedagogical Research in Sweden 2007, Year 12, Nr. 4, p.301-323/
Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige 2007 årg. 12 nr 4 s 301–323

⁴⁰ The first category above have completed their upper secondary studies (*gymnasiet*) in the initial program of their choice; the second category also completed their upper secondary education – but in a different program than intended from the beginning; The third category **have not** completed their higher secondary education – those are the persons we know least of, apart from being drop-outs! That is what the table says.

Svensson's (2007) results showed that about 20-25 percent of those who started studying within the national programs hadn't completed high-school within three years. It is more common that men interrupt their studies than women, also among those coming from lower status social groups⁴¹ and especially among those with lower grades at compulsory school level (even when that is partially due to shifts in the grading system). The study also shows that a lower interest "from scratch" for the program they have been admitted to is more likely to lead to interruptions, as well as negative experiences during the study time: feelings of exclusion, bullying, lack of support with the studies.

Amount of persons who completed respectively interrupted their studies within the initial program; Division after gender. In percent (rounded)

<i>Category</i> <i>Program</i>	<i>Completed the program</i>		<i>Changed category</i>		<i>Studies not completed</i>	
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
S-NT	80	74	6	5	14	22
S-SV	79	71	4	4	17	25
Y-NT	64	70	6	2	30	28
Y-ÖV	72	62	3	5	25	33

Source: Svensson (2007), p.311 & UGU

Most of those who interrupted their studies in a national program did it in the third year of studies, while many of them had rather high scores otherwise – about a fourth, many enough to be admitted to higher education programs (i.e. minimum 2.250). That indicates that not all of those not actually obtaining their final grades or examination should be considered early school-leavers as such. On the individual program though there are quite few that have completed their studies, partially because of the nature of the program (most participants only follow that section during the first year, as the program is meant to function as a preparatory program to enable pupils to join the national program, due to earlier learning difficulties prep-classes? (Answer: something alike). However, if the time span considered is prolonged with a

⁴¹ A classification in three social groups is used, following the parents' occupation: Social group 1 – Higher ranked civil servant and self-employed (15 percent of the samples); Social group 2 – Other civil servants and self-employed (40 percent); Social group 3 – Workers (38 percent).

year, the perspectives improve visibly (about 30 percent higher success rate) (Svensson, *ibid.* & Skolverket/ National Education Agency 2007a, p.25).

Together with gender and grades in compulsory school, social category appears to be a clear indicator, showing an obvious tendency for pupils from social group 3 not to complete their studies, especially with regard with more theoretical studies – especially in Natural Sciences, where the success rate is 67 percent, compared to 84 percent in social group one.

Amount of persons who completed, changed program or interrupted their initial program, after social group, in percent

Category	<i>Completed program</i>			<i>Changed program</i>			<i>Studies interrupted</i>		
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>
S-NT	84	79	67	3	5	8	13	16	26
S-SV	79	79	73	4	3	4	17	18	23
Y-NT	71	74	65	4	3	4	25	23	32
Y-ÖV	71	72	67	6	4	3	23	24	30

Source: Svensson, p.311 & UGU

Towards the end of the 1990’s there was an increased tendency for early school leaving, but that could partially be related to structural changes in the system, which implied that the 1998 generation had to fulfil higher demands than the previous generation, with the risk of getting sub-standard grades on individual subjects that could each lead to the studies to be considered incomplete (which was not the case the previous generation. However, the 2003 generation shows much better results, which indicates recovery – which may depend on a generally higher level (including of confidence) among the pupils, and probably even better confidence among the teachers supposed to apply the new system.

**Pupils admitted to higher secondary education, Autumn 1993, Autumn 1998 & Autumn 2003*
Proportion of those who completed or not within any of the programs within three years - Percent**

	<i>Studystart 1993</i>				<i>Studystart 1998</i>				<i>Studystart 2003</i>			
	<i>S-NT</i>	<i>S-SV</i>	<i>Y-NT</i>	<i>Y-Öv</i>	<i>S-NT</i>	<i>S-SV</i>	<i>Y-NT</i>	<i>Y-Öv</i>	<i>S-NT</i>	<i>S-SV</i>	<i>Y-NT</i>	<i>Y-Öv</i>
Completed initial	79	83	81	81	70	70	65	65	76	76	68	69
Completed different programs 4	1	0	0	7	3	1	2	5	4	3	4	
Incomplete (any)	17	16	19	19	23	27	34	35	19	20	28	27
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*For classifications, see table above

A closer analysis of the material indicates a few general trends: there are subjective and objective grounds that play a part in creating differences among pupils. Social category – influencing initial prerequisites, less promising for social category 3, is one of the constants. Gender as well – with the difference that girls do generally better at all categories, apart from the more technical/vocational programs, where boys do better. That girls have a better starting point can also be related to their better results during the early compulsory school years, which may depend on better initial motivation and ambition – which earlier studies indicated (see for instance: Svensson 1971, Wernersson 1989, Halpern 1992). It is however more difficult to interpret the difference that occurs in the case of the technical programs, why do girls react less positively in that case? On the other hand, general tendencies should not be interpreted as more than that, as there are sufficiently many examples going against the trends. There are many enough pupils with relatively good grades that chose not to complete their studies anyway; Stressful situations, difficulties to concentrate, lack of support, feeling bullied and harassed are as many negative factors of influence for those affected – however a majority indicated that they felt good in school.

Svensson's final analysis leads him to the conclusion that the results should not be interpreted in a more dramatic manner than justified, but rather that one should take signals seriously while also noticing the positive elements, and in the same time attempt to find better ways to counterpart the negative influences. Among the recommendations should be noted the necessity of attaining a better performance within the compulsory education system, which is a prerequisite for further educational success, and ensure better support for the pupils in need of that, personalized and adapted on individual level.

Early school-leavers and the labour market: Outsider youths

In 2003, an official inquiry took up a subject that many interesees? [Answer: persons interested in the matter] coming in contact with youth through their work or activities showed concerned for: Outsider youths (*Unga utanför*, 2003:92). The labour force investigations (AKU – *arbetskraftundersökningarna*), that are a constant in the Swedish statistic landscape, showed

⁴² (A. Svensson – *Dagens gymnasieskola – bättre än sitt rykte?* Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige 2007 årg 12 nr 4 s 301–323 issn 1401-6788; UGU-undersökningen: ETF – Cohort-sequential longitudinal databases Evaluation through follow-up)

that the amount of those youngsters between 16-24 years of age who are not studying, not working and not having any other known activity has been increasing during the 1990's. See also EUROSTAT: these 'leavers' under ISCED 3c = 12%, in 2007 diminished to 8.6%. In Statistics Sweden's longitudinal database LOUISE, containing data on all inhabitants over 15, has been the main source of information.

In 2002, from the total of about 940 000 persons meeting those age criteria, there were 25 000-30 000 persons that obviously have major difficulties to establish themselves in the society = 3%.

Those remaining outsiders 16-19 year old for more than two years it may be much more difficult to establish themselves in the society. Many in this group are foreign-born and especially those having been in the country (for a shorter time). The most important difference compared to others of the same age is that the group having been outsiders more than two years have not finished the compulsory (elementary) school to the same extent as the average. There is a group of about 25000-30000 persons 16-24 years old that can be distinguished from others in the fact that they have clear difficulties to establish themselves, as there is a higher risk for them to remain outsiders among those who haven't finished the compulsory school – with a higher risk for those older than for the younger. The risks remain disproportionate even when other variables are controlled, such as: gender, social background, housing area and immigrant status – and even when comparing two different periods of time with different conjunctures, 1994-95 and 1997-98.

Out of the 27 000 persons who remained outsiders both year 2000 and 2001, there were 11000 foreign born and almost 7000 had lived less than five years in Sweden OK; Those having lived shorter than five years in Sweden had most difficulties in getting established in the society – and it was more difficult for the older ones than for the younger ones. A third of all those aged 20-24 and who were outsiders 1990-1991 were still outsiders in 2001, and among those who had only lived in Sweden for five years, there were still outsiders when we did our follow-up of their situation in 2001 – which is, 10 years later. 28 percent of the same group however were so well-established in the society that they received salaries exceeding the minimum basic income/ social norm (three *basbelopp*⁴³). This is thus comparable to the most successful group, 16-19 years old Swedish-born men who only were outsiders for one year –

group of which 63 percent had now incomes over the social norm (see above) and only 8 percent continued to be outsiders 10 years later.

Sweden went from being an example for other EU-countries with one of the lowest unemployment levels to be, after the economic crises at the beginning of the 1990's to one unusually high. More than 19 percent of the Swedish youth between 15-24 years old were unemployed in 2007. This is an unusually high level, which unfortunately is higher than in most other EU-countries.

Back to the "raw" statistics: in the spring of 2008, 23.4 percent of the pupils finishing compulsory school (year 9 of study) lacked a complete set of pass-grades, i.e. in one or several subjects, of which 11.1 percent in one or several of the obligatory subjects (see previous footnote). In more detail, 7.4 percent had not passed math, 3.5 had not passed Swedish, a whole 22.3 (!) had not passed Swedish as a second language, and 5.7 had not passed in English.

What catches the eye by far is the astounding, but not surprising high number of pupils that did not make it in Swedish as a second language, almost a quarter of that part of the school population. That confirms once more the seriousness of the issue, unfortunately that out of some reasons, an exceedingly high amount of immigrant background children do not reach the level of knowledge that should enable them to have a chance in the Swedish education system. As, in Sweden, the Swedish language is the key of access to education, how can one open this liberating door – and sometimes, even find it, if the very key is missing?

4 Priority measures for appropriate communication skills – equal opportunities for immigrant children

The role of language skills in education and in acquiring educational performance
Trans-national migration raises a multitude of problems, some determinant for those concerned. The situation of children and the need to ensure their harmonious development is at the centre of the international attention. An important issue concerns the right to education. This, however, demands that certain conditions need to be met in order to provide children with a real opportunity to develop their intellectual capacities for education. Ensuring a normal development of basic communication skills is a must, as this is the key to further intellectual and educational accomplishment. A solid knowledge of one's mother tongue is a

sine qua non condition in this context, without which a proper further intellectual development is difficult to conceive. The same is true about knowledge of the language of the country in which one lives. For international migrants, an active and able (educated) bilingualism is of central importance for their integration and sense of belonging to the host society. For the second-generation immigrants, bilingualism is a condition for health and survival, as it is hardly possible to properly learn a second language without having a decent command of a first one. The issue of implementing a policy of bilingualism needs therefore to be devoted considerable attention. Whether it implies purely linguistic competence (Carroll 1961, Virta 1994) or communicative competence (Canale & Swain 1980, Rivera 1984, Virta 1994) as a cognitive phenomenon (Laaksonen 1999), bilingualism is an important instrument of communicative or/and cultural competence (Allwood 1985, Laine-Sveiby 1991, Virta 1994, Runfors 1996, Laaksonen 1999). It is necessary both as an instrument of social integration and personal development and an instrument of empowering a person with an immigrant background to get control over his/her future. In a world where international migration characterizes the new global society, this important issue emerges as a condition of democratic development in terms of equal access to education. The more so, when as early as in 1986 it became clear that "linguistic and cultural minorities have [...] emerged as a central concern for educational policy in almost all OECD countries" (Churchill 1986:4). The issue of implementing bilingualism, from political decision to practical accomplishment, requests special attention, for the mutual benefit of all parties involved.

Mother-tongue instruction for immigrant children and children belonging to historical minorities

Access to appropriate bilingual education – formal rights in Sweden

4.1.1.1 Recognized historical minority languages in Sweden and their speakers' rights

Sweden has recognized the existence of *five minority languages*, - Finnish, Tornedal-Finnish⁴⁴, Saami, Yiddish and Romani or Romanese⁴⁵, conferring the respective groups a special status and granting them increased rights related to preserving their cultural heritage. Children belonging to these minority groups are entitled to education in their own language under all circumstances, even when adoptive children are involved.

⁴⁴ *Tornedalsfinska* or *mienkiele* is a local variety of Finnish, considered as a distinct minority language.

⁴⁵ SOU 1997:192, *Steg mot en minoritetspolitik - Europarådets konvention om historiska minoritetsspråk* – "Inquiry on the European Convention on Historical Minorities' Languages"; SOU 1997:193, *Steg mot en minoritetspolitik - Europarådets konvention för skydd av nationella minoriteter* – "Inquiry on the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities"; Proposition 1998/99:143, *Nationella minoriteter i Sverige* – "National Minorities in Sweden" and consecutive legislative changes based on it.

4.1.1.2 Mother-tongue instruction for immigrant children

The so-called home-language reform, applied since July 1st 1977, enforced the obligation to offer home-language classes (later called mother-tongue instruction), implying that the communes had to estimate the extent of the need, plan and reserve the necessary resources required, as well as organize and inform those concerned on the possibility to ask – and have a say in how these classes shall be organized. Until 1985, the unconditional right to benefit from these classes was only limited to pupils whose mother-tongue was *spoken within the family*⁴⁶, which may imply varying levels in their language knowledge (Hyltenstam & Tuomela 1996:46). After 1985, this right was limited according to a new definition, which meant that only *children having at least one foreign parent who uses that language as a communication means with the pupil on a daily basis* were entitled to classes in that mother-tongue (ibid.). Only children speaking ‘traditional’ minority languages i.e. Saami, Tornedal-Finnish or Romani as well as foreign adoptees were exempted this condition (ibid./see below). Budgetary means were allotted to cover these expenses, based on the number of hours required by the municipalities, who got to decide how these resources should be used.

Mother-tongue education may normally comprise a single language, however if a pupil has studied in his/her country of origin, before the arrival to Sweden, in another language than their respective mother-tongue e.g. Kurdish pupils who migrated from Turkey, they may get study-counselling in that language instead (ibid.).

From a multiculturalist point of view, the Swedish educational system aims to ensure possibilities for individuals to both maintain one's cultural heritage (through access to mother tongue instruction), and, when immigrants are concerned, to help them have the possibility integrate in the host society by giving them access to appropriate Swedish language training.

Instruction in the Swedish language is included in the basic introduction program for all immigrants, with a certain differentiation between adults and children, depending on their capacity and their respective need and possibility to achieve a level of competence comparable to that of the natives, as desirable. However, children have in practice more extended rights than adults, to ensure their access to comparable opportunities with native Swedes in order to benefit from equal rights. In practice, this implies achieving a comparative

⁴⁶ *vars hemspråk utgjorde ett levande inslag i hemmet* (Hyltenstam & Tuomela, ibid. p.46)

level of linguistic competence likely to confer them real opportunities to continue and complete their education at all levels, if they wish to do so.

4.1.1.3 SFI - "Swedish for immigrants", earlier Swedish as a second language

The so-called "Swedish for immigrants", or **SFI** – instruction, was earlier known as Swedish as a second language, and is a form of education granted to all immigrants older than 16 years of age (younger persons are covered by the compulsory school system, which includes the right to education in Swedish as a second language). The SFI-program started back in 1965, with the goal of giving foreigners a basic knowledge of the Swedish language and society⁴⁷.

During the years, Swedish for immigrants in various forms has been taught to countless immigrants from all corners of the world. But this cultural diversity is not always conducive to rapid learning. This is one of the reasons why it has been targeted with criticism that has already led to extensive internal change and re-organization. And many teachers and students are still not pleased with the way things are done. The demographics at SFI classes reflect the make-up of Sweden's immigrant communities in general. During the school year 2000/20001, there were 37 000 persons who studied within the SFI-system, about 60 percent women. About 20 percent of the students then had Arabic as a first language, followed by Kurdish, Bosnian and Spanish with 7 percent each. In total, about a hundred languages were represented. Of all these, about 20 percent had a previous education shorter than six years, approximately half of which were analphabets – while 64 percent had an education longer than 10 years. In the 2003/2004 school year, 9,000 Arabic-speaking students enrolled in SFI, with Spanish-speaking students, almost 3,000, on the second place. English-speaking students came in fifth place, with a little over 2,000 persons. This broad spectrum of different cultures is reflected at any local SFI-class: pupils with different backgrounds, speaking different languages, and with remarkably different levels of education all in the same group. And while this diversity might be stimulating in some ways, many claim it can prove an obstacle to effective learning. In a 'one-size-fits-all' language class, there will always be people who lack motivation. Some immigrants do not see learning Swedish as a necessity to get a job and integrate in society and therefore quit their studies early to work instead. That is what Marco Rizkky, born in Sudan, did after studying at SFI for three months. He has not been back ever

⁴⁷ See: "Samarbete, arbetsätt och språkinläring inom SFI" / Co-operation, working methods and language learning within the SFI (Swedish for Immigrants education). Myndigheten för skolutveckling, 2003.

since and says he has not had any problems communicating with other Swedes. "I was not really interested in learning. I wanted to get a job and make money instead. But there was nothing wrong with the teachers - on the contrary, they were very competent," says Marco, who attended SFI in 1989 and 1990. And they are just two examples at hand. However, according to official evaluations of SFI classes, the inability to provide individual tutoring to students who need it is a major failing. The problems extend beyond that. Teachers are often not properly trained to teach immigrants, making learning almost impossible.

Sweden's government published a set of proposals this month to try to address some of SFI's shortcomings. Classes will now be introduced to help illiterate immigrants to improve their reading and writing skills in their mother tongue or another language, with the hope that improved literacy in their own language will equip them better to learn Swedish. Improved training for SFI-teachers is also on the agenda, with an aim to attract more would-be language teachers to the immigrant courses, and students will be obliged to attend for a minimum number of hours every week.

An important part in a meaningful instruction in Swedish for adults is though the necessary link between a first stage of appropriating a basic knowledge of the language, enabling the possibility to communicate in daily life situations, and the more advanced phase when the level of knowledge should allow one to make use of that language even in a professional environment, for work purposes. Some of the most appreciated initiatives were directly related to that, for instance, creating the possibility to combine SFI courses with work (very popular among immigrants seeking work – see Lerum respectively Stockholm projects.

Apprentice projects started showing up, not unrelated to an explicit intended extension of a number of vocational training programs during the last years – see the project in Gävle for instance, and not in the least, projects directed to various categories of highly educated migrants, e.g. Stockholm and Malmö projects for academics in university environments, Stockholm Administrative Board projects (during several years) of special instruction in Swedish for migrants with specializations in the medical professions (physicians, nurses), or more or less similar programs (e.g. *aspirantutbildningen*) for economists or engineers. According to a recent decision of the Riksdag⁴⁸, immigrants who learn Swedish faster get a sum of money as bonus – to serve as an extra-motivation for their progress, making it easier

⁴⁸ May 20th, 2009 – "Sfi-bonus på försök i några kommuner" / SFI-bonus on trial in a few municipalities – is to be introduced on October 1st 2009; Implies that immigrants who learn Swedish faster get a sum of money as a bonus.

for them to apply for/ get a job.

Access to appropriate bilingual education – applied rights and informal results

Bilingual education and its importance for migrant children's performance

A general recurrent image of the students with immigrant background in Sweden is that, very generalized, they do not seem to reach the same level of results as the Swedish born students⁴⁹ but rather be over-represented among those who do not obtain the minimum level results necessary to qualify for access to secondary education (high-school). This difference is, in OECD-perspective, not at all unique for Sweden, but rather average, for instance in comparing the results in reading-comprehension among 15-year old with Swedish and foreign background. Moreover, these results are most likely to be influenced by socio-economic factors – such as segregation in housing, which leads to segregation in schooling (see above). Beyond statistics, which has in this case a rather limited value in absolute terms, considering the extreme heterogeneity of the categories discussed about, we need to remember that the actual individual results can be much more dependent or related to other factors than perhaps considered to a sufficient extent, knowing for instance that there is a higher probability that immigrants arriving from certain countries, such as Iran or Iraq to an extent, are more likely to be highly educated – which most often shows a direct impact on the students' performance. Beyond this heterogeneity, there are other factors (socio-economic for instance), which are also going to have an impact – a tradition in taking a special interest in the children's performance or not (e.g. engaged parents encouraging pupils, keeping contact with the school, helping if needed with the lessons, generally having a parental control over the student).

A study covering the period 1995-2007⁵⁰ showed that it was surprisingly unclear to determine the actual participation of the students entitled to education in Swedish as a second language, that seems to have decreased in practice, even though statistically their number (according to entitlement to mother tongue education) raised from 12.9 to 15.4 percent between 2002-2007. Considering the results, this study shows no relationship between participation in mother tongue education and the test results. As related to participation in the education of Swedish as a second language, there is a negative connection there, which can simply be explained by the fact that students with Swedish as a mother tongue also have best knowledge in Swedish.

⁴⁹ E.g. Skolverket: "Elever med utländsk bakgrund"/ Students with immigrant background, Skolverket 2005.

⁵⁰ "Vad händer med läsningen? En kunskapsöversikt om läsundervisningen i Sverige 1995-2007"/ What about the reading? A general knowledge survey on reading education in Sweden in 1995-2007, Skolverket: Rapport 304, 2007.

There is also the supposition that students with Swedish as a second language who achieve better results are moved to the ordinary classes of Swedish (as a mother tongue), in which case the positive effect of following classes in Swedish as a second language disappears, or reappears statistically later.

Pupils participating in mother-tongue education and Swedish as a second language education

Elever som deltar i modersmålsundervisning och i undervisning i svenska som andraspråk.⁵⁴

Year	Pupils entitled of the total nr. of pupils	Participants in mother tongue education		Pupils studying Swedish as a second language
		of the total nr. of pupils	of the entitled nr. of pupils	
År	Proportion of pupils	Deltagare i modersmålsundervisning		of the total number of pupils
	Berättigade elever av total andel elever	av total andel elever	av berättigade elever	Elever som läser svenska som andraspråk av total andel elever
2002/2003	12,9 %	7,0 %	54,1 %	6,1 %
2003/2004	13,6 %	7,3 %	54,1 %	6,5 %
2004/2005	14,0 %	7,7 %	54,8 %	6,6 %
2005/2006	14,8 %	8,1 %	54,6 %	6,8 %
2006/2007	15,4 %	8,6 %	55,9 %	6,9 %

Source: *Vad händer med läsningen?/ What(ever) happened to the reading?* – p.53

Other studies cited in the same report indicate that multilingual children, contrary to other indications, have a good command of Swedish and sometimes Swedish even resumes the first place as “stronger” language (Shidrock Namei 2002), for children growing up in Sweden. Another study cited (Fredriksson 2002, s.175) even found that bilingual immigrant children were better in both languages than Swedish students – especially girls that had lived in Sweden a longer time and had participated in mother tongue instruction, but not in Swedish as a second language. Another study⁵¹ even indicated that in such a case, the language background does not even have to be determinant, but rather elements such as age and gender. Other studies seem to indicate that awareness and experience of using one language may even get strengthened by another language – which PISA results situating Canada (an officially bilingual country) on a leading place, seem to confirm.

An article published in 2006⁵² tells the story of a school (Borgskolan) in one of the immigrant-dense areas of Stockholm, Botkyrka, most often referred to as a “problem” school, managed to show a spectacular turn of results when it raised the number of pupils who get passed from 26 percent in 2003 to 86 percent in 2005. One of the main reasons for that was

⁵¹ Hagberg-Perssons, Barbro (2007) – *Barns mångfaldiga språkresurser i mötet med skolan*

⁵² DN, 2006.03.24: ”Språket är nyckeln till bra betyg”/ The language is the key to good grades (Torbjörn Tenfält)

that the school focused particularly on the language development of the pupils – 51 totally in the two classes referred to (7A and 7B), speaking together 20 languages as a mother tongue (most usually Syrian, Turkish and Armenian – but most pupils are born in Sweden, even though mostly everybody has an immigrant background). The role of mother tongue instruction – including that of the teachers teaching them, was particularly underlined, as well as the important role that adults must play and the continuous feed-back as well as supervision of progress and results (see also earlier reference to the *Rinkeby* School in this study).

An article published by Statistics Sweden in its own research review⁵³, showed an increase of the number of under-graduate students with immigrant background, starting their studies in various Swedish universities during recent years. During the academic year 2004/2005, 16 percent (a total of 10 400) of the newly admitted students in Sweden had immigrant background – which is an increase with 5 percent compared to the year 1996/97. About three fourth of these were born abroad, and a fourth were born in Sweden, but with two foreign-born parents. The material shows great variation in the rates of those studying in point of country of origin. Iranians showed by far the highest rate undergraduate students: by the age of 25, a whole 45 percent of the group had started studying, which is as usual as among Swedish youth. Next highest rates show youth born in Finland (44 percent), Poland (42 percent), and Bosnia-Herzegovina (35 percent). At the other end, some groups originating in Africa show lowest participation in higher education, e.g.: Somalia (10 percent), but also Yugoslavia and Iraq. The factors that influence the choices are though similar for Swedish and foreign-born: social environmental factors, such as the parents' education, the attitudes towards education – propensity to from the part of the parents and others in the environment, time period of immigration are determinant elements.

Proportion of 25-years old who started a Swedish university education after birth country
Countries sorted after size of the population in Sweden Year 2004, in percent

	Total/ Totalt	Women/ Kvinnor	Men/ Män
Swedish background	45	50	37
Foreign background	32	35	28
Foreign-born after country of birth¹			
Bosnia-Herzegovina	35	46	24
Iran	45	51	41

⁵³ Anna Gärdqvist: ”Stora utbildningsskillnader mellan invandrargrupper”/Great differences in education between immigrant groups, SCB, Valfärd Nr.4, 2006.

Yugoslavia	17	21	13
Iraq	20	22	18
Lebanon	21	20	21
Chile	21	24	19
Poland	42	45	40
Turkey	25	23	27
Syria	24	22	26
Somalia	10	5	14
Finland	44	52	33
All foreign-born	30	33	28

¹ Often the land one has emigrated from as a birth land, even if it did not exist by the time the person was born., e.g.

Bosnia-Herzegovina. / Ofta anges det land man utvandrat från som födelse land även om landet som sådant inte existerade vid tidpunkten då personen föddes t.ex. Bosnien-Herzegovina.

Among youth born in Lebanon, Turkey, Syria and Somalia there were more men than women who had started university education/Bland ungdomar som är födda i Libanon, Turkiet, Syrien och Somalia var det fler män än kvinnor som har påbörjat högskolestudier.

Source: Statistics Sweden - SCB, Valfärd Nr.4, 2006

An interpretation is that of another study by Statistics Sweden⁵⁴, that came in its turn to the conclusion that:

“Pupils with Swedish background have on the average better grades than pupils with immigrant background. But a part of the differences rather depend on social differences than on the immigrant background. When differences in the parents’ education level and connection to the labour market are taken into consideration, than it is only among pupils who arrived to Sweden after the normal school start that the grades are (actually) lower.”

Source: Palaszewski & Auer: “*Utländsk bakgrund spelar mindre roll för betygen*”/ Foreign background plays a less important role for the grading. Valfärd Nr. 1, 2006, Statistics Sweden, p.3.

Considering the variation of results, but also the similarities encountered, it is obvious that the data should not be interpreted lightly or at face value. There is more to the patterns shown than just ethnicity or migration-related indicators. It is obvious that environmental factors, socio-economic factors and personal patterns of integration play an important role – even with regard to the extent to which school performance and actual equality of access are concerned. Such factors should be equally taken into consideration both at the level of analysis, and with concern to the decision-making processes attempting to offer solution to issues at hand. Other elements such as segregation in housing and structural discrimination, perceived racism or mechanisms of exclusion may have a more important impact than ethnic connotations alone.

⁵⁴ Palaszewski, Bo & Auer, Anders: “*Utländsk bakgrund spelar mindre roll för betygen*”/ Foreign background plays a less important role for the grading. Valfärd Nr. 1, 2006, Statistics Sweden. See also: Skolverket, “*Elever med utländsk bakgrund*”/ Pupils with immigrant background, 2004.

Ethnicity and (informal) access to education – passing the barrier of communication

Ethnicity is closely linked to the language issue. For immigrants, becoming accomplished bilinguals remains the most efficient way of transforming issues of formal equal access to actual realities. In the Swedish context, formally there are best conditions to achieve this goal, by a generous access to mother tongue and Swedish as a second language instruction for children with another mother tongue than Swedish – and appropriate ways for adults to achieve knowledge in Swedish, in the best case, even enabling a professional use of the language. In practice, informally, this is unfortunately not always the case – however, the issue of motivational factors should be much more taken into consideration when studying the issue, even in research context. The most serious problems that occur seem to be related to least controllable factors: On the one hand, segregation in housing and implicitly schools, placed in multiethnic areas with hardly any native speakers of Swedish makes it difficult to impossible for non-native children to achieve a good enough level of command in Swedish to actually have a genuine chance to take advantage of formal equal opportunities in education.

5 Inclusion challenges and measures related to school and everyday life environment

School success (or failure!) and social class: Have we achieved a school for everyone?

There is a clear connection between social class belonging – whatever indicators we use for the classification: income level, education, housing ...- and probable school success, or substantial probability for access to equal opportunities. Even though there are clear exceptions, it is more likely that municipal schools from immigrant-dense, segregated housing areas may face more difficulties both in school, and later on the labour market. School results are also most likely to follow the same pattern – demonstrating that such elements as how pupils actually feel in school (welcome, satisfied – or on the contrary, bullied and excluded) make a difference as to the school results obtained... Moreover, such elementary conditions as: class/ group sizes in school, the number of teachers/ adults in the classroom and in general in the school environment are as many elements that do influence the school climate – and by that, the school results. Pupils need to feel more protected on the school premises, or they suffer from the feeling of insecurity and lack of protection, and react negatively on it. It is the responsibility of the establishment – society, decision-makers, school personnel (especially rectors, teachers and other responsible adults within the school environment) who need to be there, observe and

react, helping make pupils feel safe and in command of their lives. Feeling safe and at ease in their environment can make a huge difference in enabling them to make the best of their capacities – and by that, obtain better school results, and get better opportunities for the future. So far, achieving a genuine “school for everyone”, despite the long way towards equalitarian democracy in school is still apparently a remote ideal possibility; we haven’t yet left behind a class-, gender- and ethnicity-structured school, which chances for mostly everyone, but children still struggle to succeed and reach their own balance point in an environment that remains biased.

Social and class-factors and educational results in a democratic society of “equal access”

Formal equal access to education was officially meant to contribute to an implicit democratization of the society or ‘democratic meritocratization’, yet so far, taking a closer look at the development in time, that objective has been to a large extent an ideal, despite visible transformation in the society and actual changes that should entitle to an optimistic approach of the subject. Research can mostly show partial achievements, and what it shows is rather that “education does not possess the expected equalizing effects [... but rather] tends to reproduce the current social order”⁵⁵. Society is structurally reproduced in the education system that mirrors social class structures, socio-economic backgrounds and their stratification “by means of segregation, socially uneven recruitment and social categorization at school” (ibid.). Segregation and stratification regard multiple societal structures with synergies that equal access to education should break as such – but instead somehow it seems to almost paradoxically contribute to preserve, with a middle-class mitt-point as a constant indicator of change in progress, but not necessarily shifting structures. Equal access to education is a matter of instrumental democracy, a matter of principle of societal interest – beyond that of persons as individuals, attempting to achieve what could be called a form of “democratic meritocracy” in form of providing everyone with a fair chance – to the extent possible. The target is (at least theoretically) to avoid “brain waste” rather than ensuring utopian equalitarianism, providing best prerequisites for everybody for the common good – at least on a formal plan. Combating segregation can be seen as an inclusionary measure in line with formal democratisation, where the result is a matter of individual achievement, but the actual opportunity to attend (and hopefully complete) an education program is a structural

⁵⁵ Tallberg Broman, I., Rubinstein Reich, L., Hägerström J.: ”*Likvärdighet i en skola för alla. Historisk bakgrund och kritisk granskning*”/ From a class-, gender- and ethnicity-structured school to a school for everyone. Skolverket, Lenanders Grafiska AB, Kalmar 2002, p.18.

societal achievement. *How* to get there has always been a matter of political debate and decision, in some ways – the essence of the Swedish societal landscape. According to Kamali (2005, 2006) segregation in housing in Sweden got “an ethnic dimension”, with structural discrimination and marginalisation as (side) effects. Stigmatized suburbs with ethnified class structures contribute to a further mental separation in “us and them”, concretized not only by “otherization” and exclusion, but also as a further impact on the practical “integration” process with regard to e.g. achieving language skills and implicitly influencing the extent of chances to equal opportunities in education – which is also the key to social status shifts or “success” in its multitude of interpretations. Programs of local development, renovation and improvement of the social climate were implemented on a local plan⁵⁶. Evaluations of results show a mixture of variable degrees of success and limitations, from case to case – sometimes difficult to establish, as in the case of assumed impact against unemployment, which may be either temporary, more or less strictly related to a temporary character of the investment who did not necessarily ensure a steady effect, (if any, that could be assessed with sufficient certainty). Relevant for the context of this study were measures directed towards improvement in school success, most often focused on language development – which also touches adult education. To cite a 2006 evaluation:

“The evaluations show that language measures in the local development agreements have had a clear focus on children in pre-school and compulsory school while language measures for adults have been located in other goal areas. Despite it being difficult to measure language measures for children, these are considered to be very important in the local development work. This is supported by research which has shown the importance of maintaining bilingualism. However, criticism has been made on an excessive focus on the Swedish language and deficient knowledge in Swedish”. (SOU 2005:29, p.21)

Another result proving to have a more long-lasting effect was that of providing more teachers for smaller groups of study, and ensuring quality teachers’ training – including periodical refresher courses, improving their professional competence.

⁵⁶ A major extensive program in that respect was the so-called “*Storstadssatsningen*” – the metropolitan policy program/ investment, an extensive developmental program attempting to “increase the prospects of the Swedish metropolitan regions for long-term sustainable growth by contributing to new job opportunities, and to stop social, ethnic and discriminatory segregation” (SOU 2005:29, p.19). The developmental agreements between the government and the municipalities were signed in 1999 and contained a multitude of plans and agreements of joint undertakings for a number of initiatives of improvements of housing areas and social initiatives in seven municipalities (Botkyrka, Göteborg, Haninge, Huddinge, Malmö, Stockholm, and Södertälje) covering 24 housing areas).

Class-belonging and (informal) access to education, in practice vs. theory

Class belonging has always played a role in issues regarding access to education, either as given limitation, or in the modern society, as explicit means to democratize society.

A greatly increased class and ethnicity segregation and highlighting poverty as well as poor and homeless children are new phenomena in the Swedish welfare society of the 21st century.”

Source: Tallberg Broman, I., Rubinstein Reich, L., Hägerström J. (2002), p 28.

The tendency is rather to focus on ethnicity as critical perspective on issues of access within the concept “a school for everybody” (ibid.p.46). What is made visible is that “increasingly large groups of pupils fail in school, many because of far too deficient knowledge of the language of instruction, Swedish [... to which could be added] increased segregation and an augmenting discrepancy between those who are pupils and those who are teachers [... and ...] failure is formulated in cultural terms” (ibid., Lahdenperä 1997). As mentioned also by the cited study and others, the research has primarily focused on scholastic success in pre-school and school, considering language issues of the minority pupils (ibid., see also Bunar, 1999, 2001; Hägerström, 2002; Parszyk, 1999; Ronström a.o. 1995; Rubinstein Reich & Tallberg Broman, 2000; Tesfahuney, 1999, Ålund, 1997, etc.). School segregation, socially unbalanced recruitment (with an overrepresentation of children of well-educated parents and strong study-traditions from home, and underrepresentation of “working class” origin children, with low educated parents not prioritizing education – which also influences disjunctive differences of attitude towards the school and studies) are usual focus points in research.

Gender – still an issue of (informal) access to education and social accomplishment?

Gender has been – and still is, such an indicator of change: things have changed, especially during the last half-century – but the glass ceiling still exists, despite the fact that forerunners gradually managed to forge their way within the main porch of power structures, and in some cases even manage to partake it, if still on unequal terms. Women have longly been kept away from various levels of education. This gradually changed, not without efforts – and in the end, women even managed to conquer the realm of professionalization through higher education – but it takes even further efforts to also associate social success to academic accomplishment.

Segregation in housing and school segregation – further informal barriers to education

Segregation in housing generates **school segregation**, with all its side-effects. Research distinguishes two types of school segregation. One is “**external segregation**, where the residential structures create a school structured by class and ethnicity [...] the other [...] an **internal segregation** the school system itself has created by offering an increasing number of options and possibilities of profiling” (ibid. p.26). The first type, **external segregation**, is most directly related to the issue of segregation in housing, like a spill-over effect prolonged from the home and family sphere to the extended social sphere that school is. Class issues directly connected with this type of segregation are directly related to the socio-economic status shared by the house and school situated in the same area. Low incomes within the housing area result in low resources on municipal level – and as the school inherits the limitations, which impact on the school possibilities’ to provide proper education for its pupils, reproducing the cycle of limitations related to class/income/opportunities structure. The **internal segregation** described above is rather related to possibilities of diversifying opportunities structures and options within the school, with various consequences. The relationship among the various related factors – various forms of segregation, class division, and other factors with an impact on educational access, beyond formally equal rights, is complex and requires more attention in a causal perspective.

5.1.1.1 Segregation in housing and its influence on education results – equal opportunities?

The issues related to segregation in housing are complex and not few. Apart from the obvious relation to the socio-economic sphere, segregation in housing results in disruptive direct and indirect effects on both individual and the environment – in the end, on the hosting society never the less. Areas where segregation in housing is an obvious problem are characterised by a certain lack of social cohesion, ethnic fragmentation instead of mutual integration, in the worst case, multiple semi-lingualism instead of a developed multi-lingualism, and a poor knowledge of the local language precludes further access to education in its various forms, [and even worse, an acceptable chance to get on the labour market.

“*Skolor i utsatta bostadsområden*”⁵⁷ – Schools in vulnerable residential areas” is just another study about schools situated in segregated areas, and integration processes, based on a study on

⁵⁷ Bunar, N. (2004) “Skolor i utsatta bostadsområden” Schools in vulnerable residential areas, in: Borevi, K. & Strömblad, P., *Kunskap för integration/ Knowledge for integration*, Integrationspolitiska maktutredningen, SOU 2004:33

four “socially vulnerable immigrant-dense” areas in the suburbs of Stockholm. The main line to counterpart negative, adverse developments was meant to be taken by measures on education (on various levels – including and counteracting unemployment by offering, if not jobs, some form of occupation as strategic ways to achieve integration. The author, Nihad Bunar, takes into the discussion the effect of stigmatization of multiculturalism with negative social consequences for school actors, where schools in segregated areas whose students with another mother tongue than Swedish are considered problematic and face the danger of being dismantled because of their stigmatisation and consequent bad reputation (not necessarily deserved). The author also bring into the debate the social dimensions of immigration, multiculturalism in-between ideal and reality, the problematic language issue, the anatomy of reputation, being able to rely and trust as well as the issue of communication in the relationship between home and school⁵⁸. Another study also takes up “Social dimensions of immigration” with residential areas and schools described in the public debate as “segregated, vulnerable and immigrant-dense”. Even the passage, in time, from being considered modern, advanced areas to have become “problem-zones”, can be associated with the gradual ethnic diversification, brings once again into focus in this study, the issue of categorisations and the question: is being an immigrant a static category that never changes? Its impact on educational opportunities should also be contextualised, to include even elements related to the limitations of formal “freedom of choice”, both as related to the practical limitations in actual choice of residence/residential areas⁵⁹, and the probable impact of that limited choice upon opportunity structures. Beyond that, the variations sometimes going against the trends, to positive developments, due to personal motivation, or differential treatment adapted to needs, has among others been described in another study: “Is individualisation the key to success?” An SCB study from 2006 (see also Andersson 2000, 2001, 2006) stated the extent to which children in Sweden live in segregated housing areas. A study from 2007 confirmed those results, noticing that in 2004, 9 percent (around 186 000) of Sweden’s children lived in “immigrant-dense” areas, stated that “the issue of segregation is particularly important if it has an impact on peoples’ living conditions”. Based on its results concerning primarily connections made between the school results of 9-graders⁶⁰ and the role segregation in housing may have, the study stated:

⁵⁸ see also Bunar’s: “*Skolan mitt i förorten. Fyra studier om skola, segregation, integration ...* / The school in the suburb’s midst. Four studies on school, segregation, integration”, 2001.

⁵⁹ Persson, Lotta (2007) – *Barn, boendesegregation och skolresultat* / Children, segregation in housing and school results, SCB.

⁶⁰ i.e. last year in primary, compulsory school – whose results provide competence to continue studying on upper secondary level

“Children in immigrant-dense areas have worse school results than other children. This [proves to be] valid irrespective of the parents’ income and education [level] as well as family structure, background country, time in Sweden, type of dwelling and school. [...] Students that both live in an immigrant-dense area and go to school in an immigrant-dense school run about a double risk not to get grades conferring them competence to [continue their studies in] upper secondary education, compared to children both living and going to school in an area where mostly everybody has Swedish background. Worse knowledge in Swedish is probably an explanation to worse school results in immigrant-dense areas. Perhaps another [explanation] is that families with stronger resources choose to move out from these areas.” (ibid.)

That also confirms the importance of initiatives and results like those obtained by Bergskolan in Botkyrka or the Rinkeby school (see above references), who demonstrated in practice that there is a clear link between improved (bi-/multi-)lingual competence and better school results.

Number and share of children 0–17 years by origin, 2007

Antal samt andel barn 0–17 år efter ursprung

Origin from	Number	Proportion %
Sweden	1 684 191	87
The Nordic Countries	23 577	1
EU25 (without the Nordic countries)	20 067	1
Europe (without EU25)	69 691	4
Africa	30 159	2
North America and Oceania	2 463	0
South America	11 675	1
Asia	96 998	5
Unknown	345	0
Sum/ Total	1 939 166	100

Source: Statistics Sweden/ SCB (2007) *Barn, boendesegregation och skolresultat*, Demografiska Rapporter 2007:2 /Children, segregation in housing and school results

Since the 1990’s, there were three national programs meant to increase development and reduce segregation:

- The “Blomman” investment, after Leif Blomberg, then Immigrant Minister; it implied that between 1995-1998, a number of municipalities received earmarked funding, mainly to increase immigrants’ competence to enable an easier insertion on the labour market⁶¹.
- The second program was called “National Example”, meant to offer economic support to a very limited number of municipalities⁶²
- The most recent, *Storstadssatsningen*, The Metropolitan Investment, launched in 1998 (The Metropolitan Policy Program), is a very extensive package of measures for seven municipalities in 24 socially vulnerable areas⁶³ in the three largest cities of Sweden

⁶¹ The municipalities receiving this funding were: Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Botkyrka, Haninge, Huddinge, Solna and Södertälje. In a second step in 1997 were added: Eskilstuna, Landskrona, Norrköping and Trollhättan.

⁶² These are: Fittja (Botkyrka), Rosengård (Malmö), Gårdsten och Hjällbo (Göteborg). Source: Boverket/ (2005) *En hel stad - An Entire City* /National Board of Housing, Building and Planning.

⁶³ between about 3500-24000 inhabitants each

(Stockholm, Gothenburg/ Göteborg and Malmö) which were based on local development agreements between the municipalities and state. The program continues in a different form, meant to be covered by the ordinary local municipalities' and authorities' budget. Additional 18 municipalities⁶⁴ were included in 2007.

5.1.1.2 Class division, segregation in housing and multiculturalism

Storstadsutredningen (SOU 1990:20) – The Metropolitan Inquiry, the final report of a governmental initiative meant to take a closer look to the modern conditions in urban areas, in particular the situation of the youth, analysed the living conditions and aspects associated with the integration process of migrants, in interaction. Among a multitude of aspects noted, some of the major trends described are, not unexpected, as follows: The class divisions increased when economic problems worsened in the society, augmenting class – and ethnic – segregation. This has a direct impact on several aspects related to immigrant integration, including educational aspects. Among the most dramatic effects can be noted the increased inequality of chances for more vulnerable categories, among which numbers of immigrant youths. Even though there are studies indicating school success for some groups, there are indications that many school pupils are confronted with multiple problems – and in the most dramatic cases, feelings of exclusion may even lead to an increased risk of criminality. In 1998 was launched the Metropolitan Investment (see above), an extensive investment program meant to “break the social, ethnic and discriminating segregation”. Extensive evaluations came to a rather unanimous conclusion that, on the whole, the actual results were a fiasco, considering the initial goals. However, many activities and part of the initiatives financed had some positive impact on individual persons concerned⁶⁵.

A similar inquiry by *Storstadskommittén* (SOU 1997:61 *Att växa bland betong och kojor* /To grow up amidst concrete and cabins), mapping the children's and youths living conditions in exposed residential areas of large cities come to the conclusion that those losing most in the austerity programs are children with special needs, as even if there were no explicit cuts in that budget, however the needs increased. Children with immigrant background are mentioned in the same place as more dependent than others on a high quality education, especially to enable them to develop a good command of the Swedish language – the key to the Swedish society, but also in their mother tongue. The need to take a closer look at the impact of budget

⁶⁴ Borås, Eskilstuna, Gävle, Halmstad, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Kristiansstad, Landskrona, Linköping, Luleå, Nacka, Norrköping, Sundsvall, Trollhättan, Umeå, Uppsala, Västerås och Växjö. Source: *Storstadsdelegationen* (2007), and *Storstadsdelegationens årsrapport 2006*.

⁶⁵ See also: SOU (2005) *Storstad i rörelse!* Large cities in movement.

cuts, especially when affecting the youngest pre-school children and children with immigrant background was also reiterated.

Fokus 08 (2008)⁶⁶, Sundlöf (2008), Kölegård, Stjärne et al. (2007), SCB* (2006), show that creating better conditions for the educational process by adapting the investments to needs – e.g. by ensuring a sufficient number of (qualified) teachers, improving their competence and making proper use of national tests as a means of developing and improving governing documents and objectives, makes a positive difference. Considering the situation of the youth living in socially vulnerable, (immigrant-dense), the common conclusion of several studies is that their situation should be interpreted and understood in its complexity, not only from the point of view of their foreign/ immigrant background or socio-economic status but considering the overall effects of class, ethnicity and segregation in housing (Fokus 08, p.10). The time spent in Sweden plays an important role with regard to school results, especially considering the extremely heterogeneous groups that pupils with immigrant background most often are. Interviewed teachers and rectors showed frustration over the fact that there are no appropriate means to measure progress of e.g. (relatively) newly arrived pupils – of which many may have no actual experience of schooling⁶⁷. Usual grading is not a good indicative instrument in such a case, when due to objective reasons, the way to measurable good – not to mention “pass” grades results may be very long. Some of the positive experiences from such schools, with a compensatory effect, are mentioned:

- Adaptive methods taking into consideration actual levels of the pupils’ knowledge
- Qualified teachers – most important in such vulnerable areas;
- Competent teachers with high, clear and positive expectations towards the pupils
- Make the level of required knowledge known and understood by both parents and pupils
- Establish an appropriate level of the study process (in teaching-learning), considering an appropriate common denominator in knowledge level
- Encourage and involve parents in the pupils’ homework as well as their constant, friendly contact with the school
- Involve other (adults/ personnel but teachers and rectors in school (e.g. leisure time leaders, etc.) contributes to improving the school climate and reduces instances of harassment ...
- The youth would need early (earlier) contacts with the working life – considering their future involvement on the labour market; as examples are mentioned: mentorship, “father” – programs, a variety of contacts with persons already “established” on the labour market, etc.
- A clear classroom pedagogy, including measures to create an appropriate study environment for the pupils is a necessity – even for creating appropriate working conditions for the pupils.

Among the problematic factors influencing the existence of the youth a longer time is mentioned the impact that the situation of parents has over that of the children. As an example, parents in a vulnerable situation, not established themselves on the labour market

⁶⁶ Ungdomsstyrelsen (2008) – Fokus 08. *En analys av ungas utanforskap/* The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (2008) – Focus 08. An analysis of the youths’ exclusion [outsider youth]

⁶⁷ See also: Brännström (2007), who showed that pupils going to school in a poor area get lower results than pupils with similar background going to school in a more well-off area, which depends partly on the structure of the classes and the pupils going there - and that differences are most obvious when boys with immigrant background are concerned.

and with low incomes, have limited possibilities to help or even support their children to break a similar development in the Swedish society. Among the most important elements in such cases are mentioned the role of weak resources and the lack of social network – which very often has the outmost importance with regard to actual opportunities of finding a job, which may constitute a challenge from the very beginning in attempting to build a career.

Indicators for the living conditions of the youth and education achievement

In 2005, 15 authorities were asked to propose indicators relevant for an assessment of the living conditions of the youth, following aims that had been taken up in Proposition 2005/05:2⁶⁸. The National Agency for Education was commissioned by the Swedish government to identify a number of indicators⁶⁹ to be followed in order to determine the factors influencing the living conditions of the youth and by that create a possibility to measure the impact of policy measures in a causal perspective. In 2008, a follow-up was presented by the National Agency of Education, summing up the results⁷⁰. In the same time, the very development of a system of indicators making it possible to elucidate youth policy should be considered in itself “work in progress” that still needs to be further refined.

Part of the variables used was related to aims related to political objectives, e.g.: to what extent the school actually facilitates progress, accumulating knowledge and personal development, giving all pupils an opportunity to benefit from a similar, high quality education. The results showed certain negative correlations between the results obtained by pupils with immigrant background, who got constantly lower results than Swedish born pupils. In the same time, girls constantly obtain better results than boys, and in general, considering a 5-year period, the general results have somewhat improved: 81.3 percent of all pupils getting “pass” grades in all 16 subjects at the end of the 9th grade in 2006/2007, compared to 79.7 percent in 2002/2003. However, there is a slight reduction of the proportion of pupils qualified for admission in higher secondary school (high-school), 89.1 percent in 2006/2007 compared to 89.9 percent in 2002/2003. Otherwise, the results show similar proportions between boys and girls (with girls constantly getting better results), and a larger difference between pupils with immigrant background, who get much lower results than born Swedes – and even dramatically lower results for foreign-born who arrived to Sweden after the first year of primary school, which

⁶⁸ Prop. 2005/05:2, bilaga 13, ”Makt att bestämma - rätt till välfärd”/Power to decide – the right to welfare.

⁶⁹ The National Education Board and The Youth Board /*Ungdomsstyrelsen* identified 15 indicators in the report ”Indikatorer för uppföljning av ungdomars levnadsvillkor” (U2005/7090/UNG).

⁷⁰ ”Redovisning av uppföljning av indikatorer identifierade i regeringsuppdrag ”Indikatorer för ungdomars levnadsvillkor”, Skolverket: Avdelningen för utbildningsfrågor, Dnr 01-2008:337, 2008.

indirectly confirms, once more, the importance of the arrival time; the latter the arrival moment, the lower the results (which can only be a side-effect of communication difficulties).

As related to achieving goals related to the education process, some variables show constant differences between various groups: pupils with immigrant background fall constantly in a defavourized relationship as compared to in-born Swedes – that is even more accentuated, the later pupils arrived. Other constant differences are related to the parents' level of education: the lower the parents' education, the lower the probability of educational success even for the next generation. The opposite verifies as well: the higher the parents' level of education, the higher the probability that even the next generation manages well.

Another positive trend seems to be a relatively increased proportion of pupils who feel safer in schools, compared to earlier years. Even though most results related to perceptions of being bullied or mobbed are constant (whether they feel bullied by their fellow pupils or by their teachers) – also as related to equal treatment of boys and girls, the proportion of pupils who consider that their teachers care and take into consideration their experience and points of view, increased from 61 percent in year 2000, to 70 percent in 2003. There is a constant increase in the pupils' opinion that they can participate in and influence the decision-making process as to the content of what they should learn in school, from 25 percent in 1993, to 44 percent in 2006. However, these are fewer than those saying that they would be willing to have some influence (60 percent, compared to those actually considering that they do/can exert some influence, 44 percent). Beyond that, the number of pupils expressing interest to exert an influence has lowered compared to earlier years. There is also a gender aspect: it is more usual that girls want to exert and influence upon the content of the instruction than boys.

In an analysis of the results obtained in 2000 by the National Agency of Education⁷¹, including with regard to measures applied to improve the situation, confirms the importance of applying an adaptive approach in education on various levels. Among the successful measures taken were an increase in the number of teachers and other employees within the education system (The National Agency for Education had itself in 2000 a number of 307 permanent employees which were 26 more than the previous year, plus 120 temporary workers). Half of the increase in costs – with 80 million SEK, covered increase personnel costs. Improved indicators and better follow-up of the results were also considered among positive development factors. Also, the evaluation stated the importance of observing the children's right to feel safe in school, also by combating harassment and (mobbing). Developing democratic values is also important, including basic values regarding tolerance and respect for diversity, differences and various

⁷¹ Skolverket – *Skolverkets satsningar 2000*/ National Agency of Education – Investments [and results] 2000.

ways of thinking – which is also very important for the pupils' future integration in the society. The same study stated in the same time that the Swedish school and child-care system is characterized by a high education level of the personnel (86 percent in the primary school – of which a larger proportion of women and 81 percent in the upper secondary school have a pedagogical education). However, there is a concern that an increasing number of teachers lack higher education in pedagogy. These issues are expected to become even more serious in the near future through a combination of more numerous generations of children and numerous retirements among the teachers. Other reasons for concern regard information on stressed children, pupils and teachers as well as deficiencies in the working environment in certain pre-schools and schools. On a national plan, the ambition in fulfilling the requirements in the education system for the youth is “higher than the actual result”. (ibid.)

Less segregation, less discrimination

The complex, often disruptive role of segregation in housing – implicitly transferred to the school sphere, usually local by definition, is not an unfamiliar phenomenon: “*It is a known fact that ethnically segregated schools often show worse school results than other schools*” (Kamali, 2005 p.75). Already some years earlier, Ing-Marie Parszyk wrote in her dissertation *A school for [the] others:* “There is an element of hopelessness in the narrations of pupils in schools that are so very segregated that the pupils miss the possibility to integrate in the Swedish society through the school” (Parszyk, 1999, p.247). While the concept “a school for everyone” became more and more established as an ideal, the reality rather seems to prove it really difficult to achieve in reality.

“Creating a school for everyone in Sweden was primarily a project [...] intended to locate and utilize the educational potential and to eliminate class distinctions by giving everyone access to the same type of education”, it rather became “obvious [...] that education does not possess the expected equalizing effects, and consequently many researchers began to take an interest in the relationship between class and education. Research showed that, on the contrary, education tends to reproduce the current social order, that class distinctions are reproduced within and by means of the school system and that consequently educational patterns are also reproduced. [...]. This applies to Swedish children as well as to children with a foreign background, and to both boys and girls”.

(Tallberg Broman, I.; Rubinstein Reich, L. & Hallberg, J, 2002, ss. 17-18)

A rather comprehensive 2007 statistic study confirms this image, including a clear relationship between segregation in housing and a social reproduction of disadvantage in schooling resulting in mediocre and insufficient school results contributing to further reproduction of exclusionary effects. There are various explanations for this prevalent demographic image, from own segregational choice to urban concentrations due to structural reasons, discrimination, or socio-economic factors. Even more serious though are the consequences, implying direct negative effects on the educational process and opportunities.

“Slightly over 40 percent of children with a foreign background in Sweden are concentrated in 310 of the country's almost 8 000 housing areas [...] in ten municipalities [...] while] more than 50 per cent of children with Swedish background live in areas with hardly any children with foreign background at all. Segregated housing in Sweden increased during the 1990s, something which cannot be solely explained by social and economic factors. [...] There is segregation in the larger cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö [and also in] some suburban municipalities, e.g. Botkyrka, Södertälje, Huddinge and Haninge. [...] It is common for children with foreign background, who live in housing areas with a large proportion of children with other than Swedish backgrounds, to have origins in Africa, Asia or Europe excluding the EU25. [...] ***It is more common that children living in areas with a large proportion of children with foreign background do not qualify for upper secondary school compared to children living in other housing areas*** (my underlining).”

Source: Statistics Sweden, Demographic Reports 2007:2, *Children, segregated housing and school results p.117-118*

On the policy side, Sweden has had a constant stream of documents and discussions on various aspects of human rights, anti-discrimination measures, combating segregation, protecting children's rights – with a wide and often not very clear range of what actually and how it is going to be protected. This (below) is the initial of the preamble of a Government Bill, preceding the adoption of a special *Act Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students* (2006:67), enacted in 2006:

“All children and school students must feel secure in pre-school, school and adult education. Discrimination and all other forms of degrading treatment have no place in a democratic society and in activities where the equal value of every individual must be a central theme. Everyone – every child and every adult – has the right to be treated as an individual on equal terms. Every form of degrading treatment between children, between young people, and between adults and children and young people, conflicts with the fundamental values on which our society is based.”

Government Bill 2005/06:38 – Security, Respect and Responsibility. A Summary, p.3

The law the Bill above refers to (in force since April 1st 2006), often referred to in short as “Children and School Students’ Protection Act” (*Barn- och elevskyddslagen*) was developed to ensure protection specifically to pupils in schools and meant to forward equal rights and combat discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnic background, religion or another creed, sexual orientation or disability, as well as counteract other forms of degrading treatment (such as bullying and harassment). This is meant to secure protection of children in kindergarten/ pre-school and school age within these institutions, as well as establish the responsibility of these institutions in even assuring the same protection for their staff, including at the level of contracts. There are also provisions of active measures to counteract any such discriminatory manifestations (see description above).

In 2004, the (then Social Democratic) government launched a National Action Plan for Human Rights 2006-2009 (Writ 2005/06:95 A national plan of action for human rights/ *Skrivelse 2005/06:95 En nationell handlingsplan för de mänskliga rättigheterna 2006-2009*). Included was one of the most extensive series of committee reports based on specialized research, under the overall name: “*The Inquest on Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination*”, which intensively took place between 2004-2006, with about 15 official committee reports (OCR/ in Swedish SOU-series) published as a result.

One of these, SOU 2006:40 “The dilemma of Education – Democratic ideals and the Practice of Otherness” (*Utbildningens dilemma - Demokratiska ideal och andrafierande praxis*) (Lena Sawyer & Masoud Kamali, red.), discusses issues and instances of discrimination on various levels in the education system in Sweden, dealing with aspects of discrimination specific to the education system. Research indicates that “parallel processes of exclusion and inclusion in the Swedish education system” create a paradox in this respect. “Discrimination and otherness” that pupils with an immigrant and minority background are exposed to, as well as other exclusionary mechanisms within the very education system, rather alienate that category of students. A main point is that “there is a mutual relationship between the education system and the society at large with regard to maintaining discriminating representations of *the others*” (p. 12). According to the authors – who cite numerous studies on the subject, *ethnicity*, like *class*, *gender* and *sexuality* are used as *differentiating principles in the society as in the school environment* (my Italics). The multicultural policy that lead to the well-intentioned idea of a “multicultural school” may in itself had counteracted its purpose, by reinforcing a polarisation between “us and them”, reproducing the Swedish society’s patterns of structural and institutional discrimination. The school reproduces the society’s power structures and implicitly, its social stratification.

There are also provisions of active measures to counteract any such discriminatory manifestations (see description above). The National Agency for Education has a defined anti-discrimination strategy⁷², meant to make the legal provisions in the matter – as well as the nature and content of the related policies and anti-discrimination plans required by law⁷³.

⁷² See: *Skolverkets antimineringsstrategi* /The anti-discriminating strategy of the National Agency of Education (2007)/ Dnr 01-2007-2708

⁷³ Law (2003:307) prohibiting discrimination; Law (1999:130) regarding measures against discrimination on the labour market [in working life] on grounds of ethnic belonging, religion or other faith; , Law (1999:133) regarding measures against discrimination on the labour market [in working life] on grounds of sexual orientation; Law (1999:132) regarding measures against discrimination on the labour market [in working life] on grounds of functional disorder; The Equal Opportunities Act (1991:433) ; Art. 13 in The Amsterdam Treaty – on measures to

According to these laws, there is an obligation for every working place to design policy plans, which shall include:

- Which measures and how they are going to be applied, to prevent and combat discrimination
- How and when these measures should be applied
- Who is in charge for the accomplishment

When and how a follow-up is to be performed, The Discrimination Ombudsman is the authority responsible for keeping an eye on the extent to which these measures are observed and can take action when claims of discrimination on various grounds are handed in. There are some positive results, but it is difficult to say to what extent these measures make a difference. One thing is though positive by all means: the general level of awareness with regard to discrimination instances as well as the propensity to file claims has increased visibly from one year to another, and even though it is difficult to estimate the actual impact of these practices on e.g. the labour market, - especially with regard to employers' attitudes, there is a clear signal that at least inhibits most manifest tendencies.

In the education system, discrimination of pupils with immigrant background is seen by many researchers as one of the most important reasons of low results obtained by these pupils (p.13). According to the authors, categorizations with normative content (as "Arabs", "Muslims", "Latinos", "Africans", "Somalis", etc.) implicitly consolidate exclusionary mechanisms that affect pupils with immigrant background. Even teaching choices and didactic materials, by the side of the multicultural policy applied, contribute to underlining cultural differences, presenting immigrants as non-integrated, in need to integrate. Moreover, ethnic background becomes a class in itself, associated with belonging to a disadvantaged socio-economic class, often dependent on welfare and physically segregated in immigrant-dense suburbias.

A solution presented by several contributors is combating "otherness" by improving knowledge, thus making inclusion of those perceived as un-included outsiders possible, by re-identification of them as "one of us", familiar figures among others. A possibility to counteract exclusionary phenomena in school could thus be, according to Sawyer and Kamali, to design a participatory, inclusionary model based on applied CRT – Critical Race Perspective-theory.

This includes more many teachers with immigrant background active in the education system, and special courses – in some ways, sensitivity training for school staff that should enable teachers and other school personnel to meet immigrant-origin pupils in a more appropriate way.

combat discrimination; The UN Convention against Discrimination on ground of Race, UN's standard rules on Participation and Equality for persons with disabilities (functional disorders)

The main focus of most contributions remains the idea of extended systemic changes enabling a more genuine access to various education levels for all pupils, irrespective of their background.

Better access and inclusion through the individual program?

By parliamentary decision is created the possibility to offer a certain sort of a preparatory program, the so-called *preparandprogrammen* to groups of students. This proves to be important for many immigrant students, who recently arrived to Sweden and may be too old to go through elementary school, as it may enable them to get access to the knowledge they lack, e.g. in English. The individual program has got increasingly many students and became by 1996 the third largest program in the first year of study, but faded away a bit afterwards. Students going the individual program are very satisfied with both the teaching and the teachers, and many of them continue afterwards to an (ordinary) national program.

Education against unemployment: The “Knowledge-lift”/*Kunskapslyftet*⁷⁴, adult education and lifelong learning

The so-called “knowledge-lift” (*kunskapslyftet*), taking place between 1997-2002, was the most extensive measures’ package ever in adult education in Sweden. All municipalities participated in a five-year program designed partly to increase the minimum level of education – that should thus become minimum upper-secondary level – country wise and partly (through this) to contribute to reducing the unemployment rate. In 1995, also against the background of prolonged higher unemployment rates still continuing since the beginning of the 1990’s, the government presented its proposal: *Vissa åtgärder för att halvera arbetslösheten till år 2000* – Some measures to reduce unemployment by half until year 2000 (prop.1995/96:222), which underlines the costs. The government regards that as a special commitment from the part of the state, which shares responsibility with the municipalities, who retain main responsibility for the program and freedom in how to organise it. The program is seen in the light of bettering the chances of the persons benefiting from it, to be able to actually find a job afterwards. The first inquiry preceding the law proposal: “*En strategi för kunskapslyft och livslångt lärande*” – A strategy to raise the general educational level of knowledge and lifelong learning (SOU 1996:27), underlined the importance of a good education, of achieving a three-year high-school

⁷⁴ Skolverket - *Kunskapslyftet* / The knowledge-lift 1997-2002,

competence for all adults and applying lifelong learning in working life to develop Sweden into a knowledge-intensive society.

An evaluative article from 2004⁷⁵, based on a random sample of 2000 persons aged 25-55, born in one of the Nordic countries, that were missing the 3-years secondary education in August 1997, whose employment situation and income during 1994-2000 was compared to a control group of persons who did not participate in the program. The study concluded that the “knowledge-lift” has *probably* given male persons who participated a better chance to get a job (though not better pay). Through its effects, *kunskapslyftet* seems to have influenced the behaviour of employers, who now rather hired persons with a completed secondary education (3-years *gymnasium*) instead of candidates with a shorter education, for whom implicitly the labour market became worse. An alternative (but not necessarily exclusive) interpretation is that the male’s relative success may also be due to the moment in time, after a few years crises that characterised the beginning of the 1990’s, now the labour market was about to turn – not to the same extent for women though.

For women participants there were no effects on either the probability of getting a job or on their income level. More research is needed according to the authors, particularly with regard to the (eventual) impact of women – but with respect to the entire topic.

The number of course participants born abroad increased from 17.7 percent in autumn 1998, to 19.5 autumn 2000 and to 23.1 percent autumn 2002.

What influences school results?

Evaluations show that municipalities in general take good care of pupils with extensive and distinctive need of help, for instance pupils with physical impairments. Those who seem to get the worst of the system and get less and less help are instead pupils with less obvious difficulties, like silent pupils, pupils with reading – and writing difficulties, pupils with hidden impairments and pupils with general school-related difficulties. Among the measures adopted to prevent such occurrences can be counted the following programs:

- Based on a decision from September 2008, the so-called “read-write-count” program (*läsa-skriva-räkna satsningen*) is a form of special support to help developing basic skills for children, especially in years 1-3 but even older who have not achieved the minimum

⁷⁵ Albrecht, James & van den Berg, Gerard (2004) - ”The knowledge lift: The Swedish adult education program that aimed to eliminate low worker skill levels”, IFAU, Working paper 2004:17. Tinbergen Institute, CEPR, IZA, IFS.

threshold of knowledge. Municipalities are entitled to seek funding from the 900 millions SEK put aside for this measure of ensuring achievement if children are at risk not to.

- (for more advanced communicational skills, especially related to bi-/ multi-lingualism, but also other communication forms, see the anthology: "*Att läsa och skriva – forskning och erfarenhet*" / To read and write – research and experience (2007)⁷⁶.
- The importance of the role of the teacher in achieving good reading and writing skills was described by Mona Lansfjord in her study "Good reading and writing skills" (1999).

That is why the present government commissioned the National Agency for Education to investigate the effect of the municipal cuts upon exposed groups of pupils. Even though Sweden has, in an international perspective, still a rather high density of teachers and relatively small groups of pupils, there are good reasons to fear that those pupils who are in need of special support may be those most affected. It is very important to provide these pupils with appropriate support measures. The report, that shall be written by the National Education Board, is to analyse the impact of municipal budgetary cuts on the school situation of this particular group of pupils.

The conclusion might be that relevant actors (schools, teachers, municipalities) have responded insufficiently and inappropriately to alarming signals with regard to the quality and attractiveness of education. They may not have taken the measures that many pupils (particularly pupils at risk) apparently needed.

6 Integration of the disabled: Forms of inclusive education – From exclusion to exclusive inclusion, to inclusive exclusion, to mainstreaming

To the extent that is possible, disabled pupils and students are mainstreamed – by getting the necessary support, whether technical or in form of adapted conditions and sometimes even personal assistants, depending on the nature and extent of their particular disability. Much of the information concerning this kind of assistance is rather to be found within the social assistance sector, under the main responsibility of the County Councils, in charge with matters of healthcare and public transportation.

According to a recent Riksdag decision⁷⁷, from July 1st 2009, disabled pupils eligible for studies in special schools, who would have difficulties to continue on upper secondary school because of their disability, may continue to study in special schools until they turn 21 (earlier the limit was set to 19 years of age).

⁷⁶ See also: SOU 1997:108 "*Läs och skriv svårigheter*" – Difficulties to read and write;

⁷⁷ April 22 2009. The new rule will be implemented already on July 1st, 2009.

Historical development of special care and special needs education in Sweden

Societal input regarding disabled pupils in school has been repeatedly under investigation in intended attempts to find better ways to cater for their special needs. The first form of generalized compulsory basic education, with the so-called *obligatoriska folkskolan* – the obligatory popular school, was introduced in 1842, but even though it addressed the people's children (while children from higher, more well-off classes continued to benefit from special arrangements, perhaps with private tutoring that should secure admission in the competitive mainstream education system, *läroverket* – secondary grammar school), no special class was formed until 1879 (in Gothenburg), and then rather motivated by limiting hindrances for other pupils. In 1889 was introduced compulsory schooling for deaf pupils, in 1896 for blind pupils, financed by the state in central and regional schools. A similar law was adopted for the disabled in 1962.

Mentally disabled pupils remained practically outside the school system until the first official inquiry taking up the issue of need of “special help” classes in 1932. Actual legally defined special classes taking into account the nature of disability were formed first in 1955 though (with so-called observation classes, sight-classes, hearing-classes, disabled-classes). Special classes for seriously mentally retarded were started for the first time in 1860 as charity institutions. The County Councils built up boarding schools for the mentally retarded between 1875-1915 practically until the adoption of the first Social Welfare Act for the Mentally Retarded in 1967, that established a generalized legal right to schooling and activities for *all* mentally retarded. In 1944 came a real step towards a generalized education system organized according to reception areas (even though limited to “the educable retarded”).

Emerging inclusion: Institutional shifts and changes in the policies for the disabled

In 1962 the basic education system finally gets democratized, when the earlier *folkskola* and *läroverk* were replaced by the elementary school. For every new curriculum adopted ever since, in 1969, 1980 and 1994, the way of looking upon special education and its organisation changed towards a more individualized and integrated system. The aims of the 1990 special school curriculum (*Lsä 90*) were based on the elementary school curriculum (*Lgr 80*).

In 1986, the responsibility for the education of the mentally disabled moved from the Social Welfare Act for the Mentally Retarded and the Social Welfare Department to the Education Act – *Skollagen* at the Department of Education.

In 1990 was also created SIH, *Statens institut för handikappfrågor i skolan* – The state’s institute for issues of the disabled (handicapped) in school (governed by *Förordning* (1991:1081) *med instruktion för Statens institut för handikappfrågor i skolan* – Ordinance with instructions for the state’s institute for issues of the disabled).

A systemic change occurred in the Swedish educational system at the beginning of the 1990’s. The principle of management by objectives and results would also apply to schools, where two new national curricula would apply: a common curriculum, Lpo 94, for the compulsory school system (the elementary school and the special school), and Lpf 94 for voluntary types of schools. More than a decade later, it seems that the system still needs improving to enhance its efficiency.

Sweden also applies several international documents regarding disabled pupils, e.g. UN Standard rules from 1993 and the 1994 Declaration of Salamanca, which sustain the same point of view as applied by the Swedish Education Act regarding access to ordinary schools capable to fulfil their special needs. In the official inquiry: ”The State and the School – direction and support” (Ds 1995:60) there was a proposal to combine the official authority functions of *Skolverket* and SIH in the long run.

In a modern school world, disabled pupils are no longer to be considered as a deviant group in school but as equal able-bodied individuals – neither integrated nor included – terms that would continue to give wrong, excluding signals. The earlier used term *pupils with special needs* is also considered less appropriate, as it seems to indicate that there is a permanent problematic state of the pupil, requiring special measures against the pupil, when it is rather the environment that needs to be adapted to the pupil’s needs – which is why the inquiry *Staten och skolan – styrning och stöd* (Ds 1995:60 – The state and the school – direction and support) proposed the formulation: pupils in need of special support – *elever med behov av särskilt stöd*. The inquiry on pupils with disabilities in school (*Utredningen om funktionshindrade elever i skolan*, Committee U 1995:14, Dir 1995:134, *delbetänkande* (SOU 1996:167), *slutbetänkande* SOU 1998:66, “FUNKIS”) concluded that SIH’s advisory work in the field has been important and effective but it was unclear what exactly was the need of societal support for this category and to what extent the division of responsibility between the actors involved (especially the actual role of the municipality and specialized institutions involved, such as SIH) was unclear,

also in order to determine the need of support resources from the part of the state, and their division. The inquiry should also present a proposal regarding the special pedagogical advisory bodies and the state's production of didactical means, including the division of responsibilities between the state as a main actor, the local actors and authorities involved. Its main conclusion was that disabled pupils should mainly get the same opportunities to develop their "knowledge, skills, prerequisites and their capacity to adapt to the modern society and participate in its change"⁷⁸. This should require a flexible approach centered on the individual pupil's prerequisites, needs and interests, offering the best opportunities for individual development and involvement, including appropriate social-pedagogical measures, within an integrative, non-segregating, long-term perspective and inclusive. The terminology used for various disabilities is supposed to be more nuanced, while new groups of ailments previously less noted are included on the list (such as ADHD, DAMP, Asperger syndrome). Appropriate modifications to this end were proposed in the Education Act.

Another important aspect is that of the increased role of special pedagogy/ special(ized) teachers, that should be more appropriately matched to the actual need and made available in those municipal schools that require their competence, also appropriate as to the age group to address. The inquiry expresses concern as to the presumed increased scarcity of such resources involving special competence – whether the issue is appropriate funding availability or scarcity of human resources with the required competence (partially also because expected retirement of a part of the now active personnel). The inquiry committee notes the need to ensure the availability of competent personnel by ensuring continuity in preparing new generations in that direction, and ensuring the necessary material resources for that, also as a part of the responsibility of school principals /rectors in charge. Other topics: the possibility to use personal assistant as pupil assistants during school time where necessary; individual study plans and measures; contacts between school and home; division of resources and responsibilities between the municipalities – holding a main responsibility with regard to disabled pupils, the state (responsible for legislation, supervision, evaluation, funding, etc.) and the National Agency for Education, as well as the responsibility of the County Council for the health issues proper – including rehab measures. Training and hiring teachers with special pedagogical competence for pupils with multiple disabilities in special schools, also contributing to the development of that particular type of competence, as well as the

⁷⁸ Development plan for pre-school, school and adult education – quality and equality (*Utvecklingsplan för förskola, skola och vuxenutbildning – kvalitet och likvärdighet*; *Regeringens skrivelse / Govt. Writ 1996/97:112*).

capability of taking appropriate measures for a quality improvement of the activity in the field – from pre-school to high-school, with the aim of consolidating the pupils' situation – also in cooperation with the pupil's parents/ home in close cooperation between all those concerned are also important recommendations, as well as the creation of a special pedagogy center that may be used as a resource for the proper development of the field.

An official inquiry presented in 2007, *Tydliga mål och kunskapskrav I grundskolan* - "Clear goals and knowledge demands in compulsory school" (SOU 2007:28) attempted to present a model mainly based on clearer demands on objective and results, new revised curriculum and clear knowledge requirements with an appropriate grading system. Recently, the government announced the decision to introduce written assessments of the pupils' performance in school already this autumn⁷⁹, received with mixed feeling by the people. This is however only a part of the general revision of the school system, including a coming new Education Act, new curricula, a reformed teacher's training system, more discipline in the class, etc., all part of an extensive school reform package "in the making" right now. Other issues have been a matter of discussion for a longer time.

Some statistical data: The Swedish education system for the disabled

As mentioned above, the aim of the Swedish education system for children and young people with learning disabilities is to provide this category of pupils with education adapted to their individual needs, situations and abilities and which, as far as possible, corresponds to the education provided at compulsory school and upper secondary school (according to The Education Act chapter 6, section 1).

In the 2005/06 school year the number of pupils in education for those with learning disabilities was 22,200. Of the pupils, 14,400 were in compulsory education and 7,800 were in upper secondary school (*gymnasium*/ approx. high-school). The proportion of pupils in both compulsory education and the upper secondary school has increased since the early 1990s. The number of pupils in compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities has, however, gone down a little during the two most recent school years.

⁷⁹ The Swedish education system has traditionally strived to reduce pupils' stress levels in school. One particularity is the fact that pupils start getting graded late, practically at the end of the compulsory school. There has been a lively debate between representatives of the present government and the opposition about the need of performance assessment. The result at this moment is that the government decided that some form of written assessment should be introduced now at school level already from the first class, not necessarily implying grading (Skolverket, SvD 9 June 2008) – but which so far is not going to be standardized at national level, but be left to the schools as to the form which that is going to take. Critique has already been formulated as possibly creating more confusion by lack of comparable standard of assessment.

Number of pupils in education for pupils with learning disabilities 15 October 2001–2005

<i>School year</i>	<i>2001/02</i>	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>2004/05</i>	<i>2005/06</i>
School for pupils with learning disabilities – Total	19,795	20,941	21,626	21,856	22,179
<i>of which:</i>					
Compulsory education for pupils	14,261	14,761	14,916	14,715	14,394
Upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities	5,534	6,180	6,710	7,141	7,785

Source: *Skolverket*/ National Agency of Education

Special schools today

There are five special schools for deaf and hearing impaired pupils: Birgittaskolan, Kristinaskolan, Manillaskolan, Vänerskolan och Östervångsskolan. There were also three special schools with nation-wide recruitment for sight impaired as well as sight impaired and deaf, hearing impaired or mentally disabled pupils: Ekeskolan, accepting sight impaired, sight-impaired who are also deaf, hearing impaired or mentally disabled; Åsbackaskolan (similar) and Hällsboskolan accepting pupils with serious speech deficiencies, deaf and hearing-impaired with behavioural disturbances, etc. The committee's proposal was to abolish special schools as a school form, integrating them in the local municipal system – while ensuring competence in e.g. sign language for those in need of that, in an appropriate environment. The three schools above were (temporarily) privatised, but more recently, after debates – including in the parliament, Ekeskolan and Hällsboskolan are reinstated as state-driven special schools with country-wide recruitment and special competence, recently announced as a decision based on an amendment that is to enter into force on July 1st 2008. Hällsboskolan is also going to be a special resource centre regarding special pedagogical issues within its competence area. For older, high-school students with the same kind of impairments and those who went through a rehab-program a similar amendment was proposed in *Gymnasieförordningen*, allowing country-wide recruitment even on this level of education, with special funding from the state and inter-municipal compensations, linked to the obligation of municipalities to offer appropriate possibilities of education, and their cooperation with the country councils.

Earlier, the entire responsibility was borne by the state. SIH as a specialized consulting organization and the REDAH- centers of data pedagogues as well as other similar organizations

and resource centers get coordinated in a common organization. There shall also be a specialized teacher training and teacher's advanced training for all levels of teaching required (elementary /elementary special school, sign language elementary school, up to high-school level. Specialized private schools may also be actual. The need of special didactic material adapted to above-mentioned special needs is to be ensured by the state, which should also find ways to stimulate the production of didactic material, and to ensure that, this is deemed as best organized as a public (state-driven) authority. This should also ensure the need for continued education on post-high-school level, undergraduate and graduate (university) level, optimized according to needs as adult education. This should also include didactic material and new technology for the sight-impaired.

Children in remedial classes – problem solved?

According to Ljusberg (2009)⁸⁰, it has become increasingly common to solve problematic class-room situations by moving pupils to remedial classes. The study was based on research of 10 special education groups of children between 9-12 years considered to suffer from concentration difficulties. Yet more than half of the pupils had no diagnose (which is no longer required to be placed in such a class today). According to the research, this was a way of placing the problem with the pupils, as a matter of compensatory discourse, by sorting out problems. Pupils were not seen as competent discussion partners, which minimizes their negotiation space. Classifying every problem that seems to affect pupils as concentration difficulties does not only influence the teacher's way of looking upon the students, but also their own self-perception, with a double negative impact: giving too much power to teachers with too little concern for the pupils.

7 Combating bullying and violence in schools

All pupils need to feel safe in school. The school needs to be a place where children can go without being afraid and to which parents can send their children without concern. That is not always the case today. The Children's Ombudsman reports that about 10 percent – or around 100,000 pupils are subjected to bullying and rough treatment. This is totally unacceptable. When pupils get bullied, this has long-going psychological consequences for them, for their identity, their self-esteem, and their possibilities to develop into harmonic, balanced adults.

⁸⁰ Anna-Lena Ljusberg (2009) - Pupils in remedial classes. Remedial class, attention and/or concentration deficits, pupil perspective, pupil's perspective, classroom climate, socio-cultural perspective, self-concept

Fanny Jonsdottir (2007) who specialised in research on children's friendship relationships noticed that "more than every 10th child [already in pre-school] is not chosen by any other as a friend. That proves [...] that children get excluded already in pre-school", with great variations however between various units and sub-divisions.

A number of studies published by the Children's Ombudsman show that children in various age-groups – from pre-school age to 18, experience anxieties, exclusion, fear and frustrations⁸¹. The Act against Ethnic Discrimination and other degrading treatment of children and pupils (2006:67) *Lag (2006:67) om förbud mot diskriminering och annan kränkande behandling av barn och elever* prohibiting discrimination and other abusive treatment of children and pupils (also called "Children's and pupils' protection law") was enacted on April 1st 2006, and is meant to confer explicitly granted rights and grant fair treatment to children and specifically pupils and students in schools – now entitled to explicit protection against mobbing while in school, and if the school fails to ensure that protection. Bullying and harassment should not occur within the school premises. It is the responsibility of the school staff to see to it that pupils are not exposed to offensive treatments. There is thus a liability that goes beyond the actual time of sufferance while in school. That made it possible (and there are already a number of cases) for the pupils who felt thus discriminated and harshly treated during their school years, without the school taking proper measures to stop that, and even require punitive damages against the school who failed to comply with its obligations. There are already such cases that went to court, and damages up to 40000 SEK were awarded as compensation for the prolonged sufferance of such children, years after graduation.

BEO (*Barn- och elevombudsmannen*/ The Children's and Students' Ombudsman), created in connection to the adoption of the law and a more extensive anti-bullying policy, published an informative book about the content and extent of the law above and its implications⁸². That shows that the law is meant to cover direct and indirect discrimination, bullying and other abusive treatments in whatever form but not related to a discriminatory ground, also establishing the (school) adults' responsibility to ensure a proper climate for everybody (even children within the premises who happen not to be students there). For abusive treatments, children may sue the school even ten years later, otherwise the statutory limit is two years. BEO merged together with the newly created *Skolinspektionen* /The School Inspection, while the former thematic ombudsmen⁸³ (now embodied by a single, large anti-discrimination ombudsman, DO).

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⁸¹ Barnombudsmannen (2005) – "Rätten att komma till tals"/ The right to be heard, Report BR 2005:03. (see also an article included in the same volume: "Hur kul är det, på en skala? /How fun is it on a scale ... (summarizing aspects from the results of the 2005 research). See also: Barnombudsmannen och SCB/ Children's Ombudsman and Statistics Sweden (2004) – *Upp till 18: fakta om barn och ungdomar*/ Up to 18: facts about children and youths; Rasmunsson, B. (1998) – "Stadsbarndom – om barns vardag i en modern förort"/ City childhood – about children's everyday life in a modern suburb, *Meddelande från Socialhögskolan* 1998:7, Lunds Universitet, Lund 1998; Terjestam, Y (2003) – "Rädslor och faror i barnens vardag – en studie av grundskoleelever och deras föräldrar"/ Fears and menaces in the children's everyday life – a study about primary school pupils and their parents. FoU rapport, Räddningsverket 2003.

⁸² BEO (2007) – "För trygghet, ansvar och respekt i skolan: Information from BEO"/ For safety, responsibility and respect in school: Information from BEO. See also: BEO, DO, JämO, HO and HomO: (2007) Respect. (Publication explaining BeL (*Barn- och elevskyddslagen*) the Act against discrimination of children and pupils and its content. It took the form of a periodic comic series distributed in schools.

⁸³ The ombudsmen against Ethnic Discrimination, The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman,, The Disability Ombudsman and the Ombudsman against Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation

Bullying does not only occur among pupils. Bullying among pupils and teachers as well as teachers among themselves is unfortunately quite common as well. The demand of safety within the school premises must relate to both children and adults

All of the above can be found included in the Education Act and curricula, as well as other legislative and political documents. Every school is obliged according to law to prepare an anti-bullying plan.

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At the end of August 2006, the Swedish government commissioned (U2006/5849/S) the National Agency of Education to carry through an anti-discrimination project consisting of three parts:

- The DISK-project, examining the occurrence of discrimination as bullying, mobbing on grounds of gender, ethnic belonging, religion or another creed, sexual orientation and disability in pre-school, school and high-school as well as part of the municipal adult education. The results were presented in February 2009, with the report: "Discriminated, bullied, insulted: Children's, pupils' and students' perceptions of discrimination and harassment"⁸⁴.
- The TAL-project, a follow-up of the implementation of BEL (see above) in pre-school, school, high-school and in municipal adult education. The final report: "*Barn och elevskyddslagen i praktiken – Förskolors, skolors och vuxenutbildningars tillämpning av lagen*" /Children and BEL in practice – Pre-schools, schools and municipal adult education's application of the law" was published in February 2009.
- A third project implied an inventory of the physical accessibility to school premises and freedom of choice for pupils with disabilities. It resulted in the recent report: "Tillgänglighet till skolors lokaler och valfrihet för elever med funktionsnedsättning"

All reports make an evaluation of their respective mission and propose some solutions and working models.

In a 2007 report, 21 programs against harassment were evaluated⁸⁵. Some of them were preventive (like the *Olweus*-program⁸⁶, GBm – The common concern method, and the Farsta program. Other models: *Friends* – buddies' support model, *Medkompis* – friends together, *Mombus*/ the mobbing ombudsman, NVC – non-violent communication, *Kompis samtal* – friendly talk, *StegVis* – step by step (with wisdom), EQ – emotional intelligence, *Våga mötas* – dare to meet, all these are just a part of the respective programs, many of whom proved to be really successful, especially through their quest of opening means and ways of communication and social involvement, that proved to a success.

8 General pedagogical competence requirements – teachers' training

Considering that the fast changes all over the world demand that teachers should be conferred a new role, allowing them the capacity to adapt to new challenges, renewal and development.

⁸⁴ Skolverket (2009) – "Diskriminerat, trakasserad, kränkt? Barns, elever och studerandes uppfattningar om diskriminering och trakasserier"

⁸⁵ Matti, Tomas (2007) – "Granskning av utvärderingar av program mot mobbning år 2007" / A scrutiny of assessments of programs against harassment in year 2007", Myndigheten för skolutveckling.

⁸⁶ Eriksson, Björn and others (2003) – "Skolan – en arena för mobbning" / The School – an arena for harassment. Skolverkets rapport, 2003.

A parliamentary inquiry on teacher's training was proposed in a preliminary inquiry (Report/*Betänkande* 1996/97:UbU1, Writ /*rskr.* 1996/97:100) with the aim to consider the major changes in teacher's work within the pre-school and school. The Swedish Education Board decided in 1997 to appoint a parliamentary commission (U97:07) that should propose a new teachers' training program, a flexible system that also covers further education and research, necessary for furthering lifelong learning (Skr. 1996/97:112, Dir. 1997:54, SOU 1999:63, *Att lära och leda; En lärarutbildning för samverkan och utveckling – To teach and lead, a teachers' training for cooperation and development*). The parliamentary commission proposed a teachers' training system covering three broad areas: one covering a general education area, a second one covering direction, traditional or multi-disciplinary, and a third one of specialisation. To sum up the committee's considerations and proposals:

- The *Riksdag* and the government should have a stronger influence over teacher training programs – more than in the case of other university programs, considering its importance of guaranteeing a school of equal worth for everybody.
- The Committee proposes that colleges and universities having a teachers' training program should co-opt municipalities, schools, teachers, students and other actors representing groups of interest in the society that may have a legitimate interest to influence the teachers' training in various ways. A recommendation is to have such an open dialogue with students and stakeholders that may support the university's interests to develop its activity – which a proposed new structure of this particular study program would accommodate.
- A faculty committee or similar organ – which should include representatives from the categories mentioned above, and also representatives of involved teachers and students, - who should be able to take a collected responsibility for the structure of the education.
- Universities should agree about the division of specialisations among themselves
- If there is a shortage of specific teacher's competence within the education system, the government should give universities clearer educational assignments.
- The competence goals in the examination regulation should also be used for planning a new examination description, and the various preparation phases of the program until final exam
- There should be a continuous dialogue between universities, municipalities and schools as well as teachers involved in the program, about evaluation and quality development

Universities shall also have periodical contacts for follow-up of the examination right, the development of the teachers' education and quality development (SOU 1999:63, 383-384)

Students can thus form their own (competence) profile, and even new teachers can come back and complete their education with further directions or specialisations.

The need of (forming) new teachers is also related to the fact that many of the present active teachers are getting old. A recent report presented by the Swedish National Agency for Education, *Utbildningsbehovet av lärare i allmänna ämnen – The education need of teachers in general subjects*, is going to increase the number of retirements from today's teaching positions in Komvux during the following years. By 2010, the proportion of today's active teachers to still be active is estimated to 39 percent.

Within the SFI (Swedish for immigrants) education, the lack of adequately trained teachers in the subject is extreme even though the situation became slightly better during recent years. Among those presently working in that field, of those still working within the SFI- system, more than half lack special subject-related education, while 16 percent of all teachers lack both teachers' training and subject related theoretical education. A recent evaluation of the SFI system⁸⁷ concluded that the proportion SFI-teachers with at least 60 university points or similar, is larger than the statistical data show – which may be motivated by methodological differences between Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) in questionnaires and interview-based research, and the way various courses in SFI – on various levels, are registered in the system. In connection to the evaluation, some municipalities showed concern for the SFI-teachers possibilities to support themselves. Another issue is that of possibilities of getting specialised, consideration was given to consider a special form of teachers' training for them; they considered that the state-organized to cover their need for further education are good, but insufficient. There are already alternative possibilities (also) open to SFI-teachers. One is the so-called "Teachers' (knowledge) lift" (*Lärarlyftet*), a special program deployed under 2008-2011, accessible even to SFI-teachers from January 2008. The program is meant to ensure the achievement of a proper level of education for active teachers who already have a pedagogic exam and are currently working as teachers – a program open to teachers of all levels, from pre-school and elementary school to upper secondary and adult education. A minor part of the program is reserved for an alternative program, VAL – *Vidareutbildning av obehöriga lärare*/ Further education of unqualified teachers, i.e. persons working as teachers but do not have a pedagogical exam. However, a requirement is that they should not need more than 60 additional points to complete their education in teachers' training. So far, SFI-teachers participation was low on both programs (17 teachers only) – but it is expected that more many of them should participate later. An explanation is also that the municipalities do not necessarily consider they can afford sending temporary teachers and teachers not having a full-time (permanent) position to such courses. Another reason suggested was the relative high age of the teachers, which may explain some limitations in motivation.

A conclusion was that, in fact, either the present or previous studies were able to establish with sufficient accuracy what is the actual competence level achieved by SFI-teachers. There is however an assumption that the general level of these teachers is much higher than statistical data seems to indicate. Structural reasons may also be part of the problem: municipalities bear the responsibility of ensuring qualified teachers, but they are dependent on getting state-funding, often insufficient for the purpose. In a different perspective, was signalled the need of a better and more reliable system of indicators, enabling a more correct approach, improve the quality of data – including statistical data in the field, and by that be able to better cope with the need of SFI-teachers and their needs for further (completing) education in its various forms. Apart from indicators – including for better quality assessment, was signalled the need of better

⁸⁷ Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) (2009) – "SFI – resultat, genomförande och lärarkompetens. En utvärdering av svenska för invandrare"/ SFI – result, achievement, and teacher's competence. An evaluation of Swedish for immigrants. Statskontoret 2009:2.

system of reference. For the purpose, the National Agency of Education has already sent a proposal for a set of national reference values likely to lead to an improvement⁸⁸.

Active teachers with or without a pedagogic exam as well as education in Swedish as a second language/ Swedish for immigrants – proportion of the total number of active teachers, in percent. Pedagogic exam and points in Swedish/ Swedish for immigrants

	2005	2007
Pedagogic exam with at least 60 university points	8	5
Pedagogic exam with 30-59 university points	14	12
Pedagogic exam with 1-29 university points	6	11
No pedagogic exam with at least 60 university points	2	2
No pedagogic exam with at least 30-59 university points	2	3
No pedagogic exam with 1-29 university points	2	2

Source: SCB/ Statistics Sweden

However, Sweden still has a rather high “density” of teachers and relatively small groups of pupils in an international comparison. However, there is a risk that those who may suffer most from the savings are going to be those groups of pupils who are most in need of help, and whose situation is more exposed, requiring specific measures of support.

The most recent inquiries regarding a new teachers’ training program – that had been announced several times during the last decade, (from 2005 and especially 2008)⁸⁹ point out four overall perspectives for achieving a successful teacher education:

- A scientific critical approach
- A historical perspective
- An international perspective
- Use of information and communication technology (ICT) as an educational resource.

A conclusion of the inquiry is that a “joint core of educational science”, a common core set of knowledge and skills are required, regardless their specialisation, alongside eight areas – that in points would represent **60 university points**. These eight areas are:

- The organisation of education and its conditions, foundations of democracy
- Curriculum theory and didactics
- Theory of science, research methods and statistics
- Development and learning
- Special needs education
- Social relations, conflict management and leadership

⁸⁸ Endorsed by *Statistikkontoret*

⁸⁹ *Utredningen om en ny lärarutbildning* (HUT 07), and: SOU 2008:109, *En hållbar lärarutbildning/A sustainable teachers’ training [program]*.

- Assessment and grading
- Evaluation and development work

A next phase is one of enhanced professional knowledge and specialisation.

“In primary school teachers’ subject education, the emphasis is placed on the learning of basic reading, writing and mathematics skills, but the education will also give skills in other relevant subject areas, depending on specialisation.

For secondary school teachers, the attention given to their teaching subjects will be substantially enhanced and focused compared with the present situation.”

Source: SOU 2008:109, p.27

Subject didactics is also considered as particularly important.

Improved scientific grounding and proven experience is another important idea taken up, as well as the necessity of investing in educational science research.

An improved practical school-based training and new types of appointment (favourising fully-qualified teachers while offering practically only temporary solutions to those who are not officially qualified to be teaching: combining *higher requirements and better levels of prior knowledge* on the one hand, and *ensuring the level of the instruction by a careful examination of tights to award degrees, profiling, cooperation and concentration* are further components of a reformed system. Other proposed components are: *In-service training and skills development* and a *sustainable teacher education*.

More and better teachers with immigrant background

In a preliminary report (*Delbetänkande om den mångkulturella skolan*, SOU 1996:143 – Preliminary report regarding the multicultural school), *Skolkommittén* – The committee of the official school inquiry, came to the conclusion the class differentiations increased while the economic problems in the society became worse. This even increased the degree of urban segregation, with a multitude of consequent undesired effects. Considering possible means to counteract the negative developmental trends in schools, the inquiry discusses possibilities of increasing the amount of teachers with immigrant background in such schools. A proposal is to submit that issue to the attention of the coming parliamentary inquiry regarding teacher’s training. Other proposals regard various aspects of teachers’ training in general – and SFI teachers in particular.

There are indications that pupils with immigrant background would get better opportunities towards obtaining better results if the schools had more many teachers with immigrant background⁹⁰. According to studies by IFAU - The Institute for Labour

⁹⁰ Lindahl, Erica (2007)“*Spelar lika kön och etnisk bakgrund på lärare och elever roll för provresultat och slutbetyg?*”/ Does same gender and [same] ethnic background on teachers play any role for school test results?, IFAU, Report 2007:23; and: Lindahl, Erica (2007) “Gender and ethnic interactions among teachers and students – evidence from Sweden”. IFAU, Working Paper 2007:25. Also: Lindahl, Erica (2007) - Comparing teachers’

Market Policy Evaluation, immigrant background pupils may benefit from having immigrant/ethnic background teachers, at least to a certain extent and with regard to some subjects, like Maths – but not necessarily in others: The analysis is based on data on grade 9 students (age 16) from Sweden. [...] a student is likely to obtain better test scores in Mathematics, when the share of teachers of the same gender as the student increases. Correspondingly, ethnic minority students, on average, obtain **better test scores** in Mathematics, **when the share of ethnic minority teachers increases**. The positive same-gender effect on test scores is counteracted by a *negative* assessment effect. That is, conditional on test scores, same-gender teachers are less generous than opposite-gender teachers when assessing students' performance. In Swedish and English, no statistically significant effects are found.

Lindahl, E. (2007) – Working Paper 2007:25, p.1

9 Conclusions

Education has always been considered one of the important cornerstones of societal development in Sweden. During the last century, especially considering the post-war period, mostly dominated by a Social-Democratic government, education became more and more a slogan – related mainly to equal opportunities, very much on the line of empowering by ensuring access to “education for everybody”. Fifty years ago, this was perhaps dominated to a certain extent by ensuring an accessible framework for adult education – combined with an implicit idea of social participation. Study places for adults did not need to be so much the traditional ones, so open universities and a variety of study circles, associations, common interests groups, made an own model of informal education a part of the Swedish model. The Swedish education system is struggling to adapt to new demands, a globalized world, a society under transformation – and meet the needs of the future in their various forms. It may, perhaps, widely be considered as what one could call a model of mild “democratic meritocracy”, where is not always easy to establish which of the components takes precedence. In the context of this report, the idea of equal opportunities has been considered in the context of social inclusion, i.e. of providing everybody with a fair chance. Formal education became a constant subject of discussion – and sometimes battleground for e.g. electoral campaigns, for both the left and the right specter of the Swedish politics. Social-Democrats and left-oriented parties accentuated the idea of accessibility and encouragement, implicitly or explicitly connected to an idea of somehow “minimizing stress”, as a part of encouraging children to

assessments and national test results – evidence from Sweden. IFAU, WORKING PAPER 2007:24, and: Lindahl, Erica (2007) ”Systematiska avvikelser mellan slutbetyg och provresultat – spelar elevens kön och etniska bakgrund roll?"/Systematic deviations between final grades and test results – does the pupil's gender and ethnic background play any role? IFAU, Report (2007:22)

A reference was also made by the SVT – the Swedish TV company in a news broadcasting on October 29th 2007, referring to a study just published at the time by IFAU / *Institutet for arbetsmarknadspolitisk utvärdering*–Institute for Labour Market policies Evaluation

preserve their interest for education and counteract eventual rejection. That is why e.g. grading in compulsory school/ primary and equivalent to lower secondary education, has been raising discussions that may be perceived as ludicrous to un-understandable somewhere else, but are taken very seriously in Sweden. What Swedish children are used to – and has been traditionally considered as sufficient for the purpose, especially towards the political left, were short progress reports, and short discussions⁹¹ between teachers and parents, held at relatively regular intervals, regarding the general and scholarly development of their children. This has been considered enough; as such contacts would actually deliver in a slightly different way, what grades are usually meant to deliver: a message on each and every child's progress – or stagnation, problems, whatever the situation is. Sometimes, when it is felt necessary – especially when there are some special issues to discuss, then the child may be expected to be present at the discussion, which probably is going to contain a plan based on general agreement of the “parties” involved (teacher, parents, children) that should lead to remedies of whatever nature, when considered necessary. In many ways, the system functioned – which their rather good results – comparatively speaking, at least, seemed to implicitly demonstrate. For a long time, grading pupils was therefore considered a rather meaningless change, in this context. Right-wing parties' arguments against that *status quo* was, on the one hand, the integration/internationalization argument (“that is what everybody does, normally”), and on the other hand that it does not seem to function as intended. Another argument was the “appalling” lack of discipline – which, it is true, may be a problem sometimes, more in certain schools than in others, but there are also more possible explanations for that too, mostly related to social/ socio-economic problems that do not automatically improve just by (re-)introducing “behavior” on the curriculum and grading it. Whatever the problematization, Swedish children had until recently got their first grades in school at the end of their compulsory school period, somehow as a preparatory phase before getting their first school-leaving certificate opening for them access to secondary education. Unlike other countries, they only needed pass-grades in all subjects (and sometimes it may even suffice with the obligatory, main subjects, like Swedish, English and Math) to be able to continue in upper secondary school, *gymnasiet*. Only recently, under a (center-)right wing coalition government struggling to own the subject of education as target of political

⁹¹ So-called “*kvartssamtal*”, recurrent discussions with the parents, are a part of the feed-back reporting from the teachers' side to the parents, but they are not obligatory – there is no absolute requirement for either children or parents to participate. These informal contacts have existed before other kinds of reports and by the side of grades.

commitment (especially *Folkpartiet*), children in 5th and 3rd grade passed their first tests – while grading became an issue even for 8th graders not so long ago ... Continuing an education should not be, according to the same party, merely a matter of will, but also a matter of merit, and capacity. Inclusion should not be understood as a quest for everybody to achieve an ever higher level of education – but rather as providing best opportunities for the most interested and motivated to reach the highest level of academic achievement they can, and for those not as motivated, to follow a path more suitable to their needs, interests and capabilities. In this context, the right wing parties' claim of bringing merit back into the education equation is not seen as limitative with regard to equal opportunities of general inclusion, but rather as a matter of pragmatic realism. According to the same voices, the Social-Democratic approach of excessive tolerance only lead to an unsustainable situation, of disorder and disturbances in schools, implicitly if not encouraging, or at least tolerating situations of systematic bullying and other forms of violence among children. Related issues, such as immigrant integration problems in schools are seen in slightly different perspectives by the right and left parties – with direct impact on policies and their consequences, while variations due to personal factors are interpreted differently – or altogether left out. For instance, the fact that research shows differences of achievement between different groups, with a tendency for e.g. Bosnians growing up in Sweden to get better results in schools, while Somalis often have difficulties... Integrating immigrants – particularly immigrant children, but also their parents, supposed to “integrate” within the labour force as fast as possible, has been a major subject of discussion in various contexts during the last decades. The inclusion strategies used with and for them varied in time, even though there are some constants. A main such constant is the importance given to achieving linguistic competence as a prerequisite for school success. Ever since the 1970's, when the first clear and documented signals of achieving “polyglot half-competence” in several languages (including their own – and Swedish), instead of a desirable bi- or multi-lingual competence (from case to case), whatever the actual denomination (“home-language” to “mother tongue”), there has been a certain constant concern and awareness about the double importance of achieving proper knowledge in the host-language (Swedish), and at times about the fact that insufficient competence in a first language makes it difficult – to impossible to develop properly a second language. This piece of truth led at least to measures directed to school children, for whom special courses in first language achievement were legislated (the intensity and quality of which varied though, commensurate with the level of commitment and the state of the Swedish economy). Some measures with the same intentions have existed, much less

generalized and much more dependent on the municipalities' capacities to cover the costs – for adults, especially for those with minimal-to-none educational competence (i.e. analphabets or/and persons with minimal primary education), offered at times possibilities to achieve a minimal-acceptable level of education through “measures” connected to their employability, that employment agencies were supposed (mostly) to organize for them and pay for, within the so-called “labour market measures” long-time unemployed are (at this moment, to a certain extent “were”) entitled to. *Kunskapslyftet* is such a measure directed towards increasing the competence of the least educated – not only migrants though, but usable for all those concerned, i.e. having not completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3) level. Going back to immigrants and minorities, it should be noted that the few categories covered by the “minority” concept – according to the European convention for protection of linguistic and historical minorities, are because of that reason covered by a much higher level of protection. This could partially explain why in Sweden, the Saami school has existed as a particular form of education – within the mainstream though, and to an extent the particular status of Finns and Tornedal-Finns within the education system (on a different level though – but that can also be explained by the difference in status – see the chapter on Saami), and in a different context, the (late) attempts made to (re-)integrate Roma in a sustainable mainstream, (yet in this particular case, the long-term extremely harsh exclusion this group has been exposed to – as in the entire Europe, should also, out of this reason, be taken into consideration as the particular case it is – see chapter on Roma). For the rest of non-in-born Swedes, “immigrants” of several generations (“for how long?” would be the next natural question), the extent and efficiency proper of the “inclusion” measures they were provided remains a much more complex subject and it may seem – because e.g. achieving linguistic competence is but one of the many issues this very non-homogenous group may in fact face – notwithstanding individual issues, motivation and results (differences included). Mainstreaming of the disabled makes most of them “invisible” in the system – because they actually are included and living within the same environment and conditions as “everybody else”. Even if for that purpose they may need special help, that is provided for them – children in schools as much as adults working or not, within the framework of the social insurance system. Having handicap-adapted schools⁹², technical means compensating special needs or

⁹² Handicap-adaptation is a recommendation at least for all new (see: *Handisam o deras arbete!* Handisam and their work. It is rather based on a number of recommendations than on purely legislative/ legislation regulated demands) buildings in Sweden – but discussions on that theme are recurrent, as is a demand of generalization of a “handicap-friendly” society and environment, where everybody, irrespective of medical insufficiencies, deficiencies or more serious problems, can and is enabled to participate on equal terms.

even personal assistants do not normally incur costs covered by the education system, and there is no statistics regarding that kind of inclusion measures, apart from the general figures collected by special interest groups or as expenses posts by the County Councils. Visible are just those persons who unavoidably need to be in a special school, excluded to be included. Even at the end of secondary school, Swedes did not require a *baccalaureate* or another similar form of final examination, so common in other parts of Europe, but it is still enough to have good enough grades during upper secondary school, to ensure admission to higher education. The exceptions are few – mostly specializations that naturally require an aptitude test, such as artistic professions: music, dance, fine arts... A paradox may be that many undergraduates, especially girls, may become very grade-centered during their studies, knowing that, interesting enough, that is going to provide them with real opportunities on the labour market – or, on the contrary, more or less preclude them, at least for a while, from a range of possible opportunities or/ and advancement. Another paradox is the fact that Swedish children seem to feel a lot of pressure anyway; from time to time, rather often, there will be reports about the fact that children of different ages do not feel well – more recently, such a report regarded children in upper secondary education in a class for gifted students, a class of excellence, who appeared to be particularly affected by some forms of stress⁹³. At times, there will also come reports on high suicide rates, children seeking various forms of help (often institutionalized, one way or another), and so forth. There will always be discussions, declarations, reports – and practically every time a particular issue or problem seems to concentrate the public’s attention, it is very probable that the government in power – especially if they do not really feel for actually doing anything more concretely, they will start an official investigation on the issue, to get better knowledge and understanding of the nature of the problem, its implications, extent and ramifications – and eventually what could be done to “solve” whatever causes it, and whatever price tag that might involve. In such a way, a commitment is demonstrated, as well as a firm will to “do something about it” (whatever “it” may be), and perhaps in practice, one gains time and postpones the expenditure. Quite often, such investigations may even lead to some change – which may be everything from an actual change, to a more or less radical modification of the initial change(s) proposed – to a rather modest to a rather marginal change, with more or less reduced capacity to actually make a visible difference, in practice. During the last decade, political controversy, debate and compromise has hardly ever led to clear results of inclusion measures that can (directly or

⁹³ DN, April 2009

indirectly) be related or traced back to such a change, implementation, or even side-effect of a related reform.

This report depicted the Swedish status-quo in point of education, with an accent on strategies targeted against various exclusionary mechanisms as related to particular groups that may find themselves, one way or another, in a vulnerable position: disabled, early school-leavers, migrants and minorities, even categories of “social outcasts” or alike.

Particular regard was also taken to aspects of safety in schools (especially related to bullying and harassment in schools), as well as the role of teachers and the instruments and possibilities they are (or not) conferred as support measures meant to enable them to actually achieve the results expected from them. Understanding the “Swedish model” and system of education was an instrumental prerequisite in attempting to understand its evolution, debates and even acquired or on-going changes – or radical reforms in course. In any case, for a correct understanding of these phenomena, education-related issues, debates and reforms need to be contextualized. Most often, reforms are a part of an enlarged context of change – sometimes ideologically motivated, sometimes referred to as a lead in a necessary updating or transformation, related to a more complex or other kind of motivation, that may even be a requirement related to the EU-integration or other international commitment – such in the case of the 2007 University system reform, linked to the Lisbon strategy. The latest declared trend is re-affirming merit as a main criterion for admission and selection within the education system – and a much more determined attitude towards whatever attitudes or manifestations that may be perceived as a disturbance. Not only is grading back in place – and extended to younger children, but “behavior” is also back as a graded “subject” and grading principle, and a general idea of making the line between those for whom it is justified to continue their education beyond the compulsory level, and those that should rather take up alternative forms of vocational training with more direct connection (hopefully – and perhaps yet still rather much in theory) to the labour market, is another trend. It is interesting in this context to note that representatives of the labour market have a tendency to complain about e.g. youngsters, new graduates or newcomers on the labour market, that they should lack the kind of qualifications that would be necessary, or desirable, on the labour market. However, they most often refuse to either take some responsibility for introducing whatever is missing among the studied subjects, or actually get involved in the education system to cater for a perhaps more practical part that would provide apprentices with the knowledge desired by their prospective employers. A shortage of means and policy shifts also had as a result that “traditional” endeavours to provide a reasonable chance for e.g. the disabled that cannot out

of various reasons really “compete” for an ordinary job on the labour market, to get an alternative subsidized job that can match their limited working capacity of those concerned (so-called “plus-jobs” for instance), disappeared or were strongly reduced lately, leaving an entire category of people without a possibility to contribute to the society’s development. Moreover, even new rules that were well-intentioned in their motivation prove sometimes to have a totally different effect in practice, when implemented⁹⁴.

This report implicitly illustrates the connection between educational aspects contained – potentially conducting to that effect, and that ultimate rejection of societal outsiders at risk.

⁹⁴ Examples are too far away from our issues and concerns; therefore not directly illustrative for the purposes of this work.

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Databases

EURYBASE
EURYDICE
EUROSTAT
SCB/ LOUISE

Attachment 1. The Swedish Education System – An Overview

The Swedish child-care system

<i>Pre-school activities & pre-school classes</i> (1-5/6 years old)			<i>School-children childcare</i> (>12 years old)		
Pre-school (<i>förskola</i>)	Family day-care (<i>familjedaghem</i>)**	Open pre-school (<i>öppen förskola</i>)	Leisure/After-school center (<i>fritidshem</i>)	Family day-care/ (<i>familjedaghem</i>)	Open after-school activities/ (<i>öppen fritidsverksamhet</i>) (6/10-12/complem.)
Pre-school classes/ (<i>förskoleklasser</i>)*					

*since 1998 (earlier "part-time pre-school [*deltidsförskolan*])

** children up to the age of 12 have access to family day-care – yet most children attending are between 1-5

Source: The Education Department/ *Utbildningsdepartementet* 1999/ SOU 2001:52 (modified/ updated)

Age-group	Formal classification	Organized activities with didactic content			Type of activity/ Leisure-time activities	
		Type of activity	Type of organizer			
1-5	Pre-primary, voluntary attendance	Pre-school (<i>förskola</i>)	Municipal	Independent	Leisure (<i>fritidshem</i>)	
		Open pre-school (<i>öppen förskola</i>)	Parents, caretakers, involving pre-school teachers*			
1-(12)	Primary (including lower secondary) Compulsory attendance	Family daycare (<i>familjedaghem</i>)	Private/Caretakers own home (most often)		Family daycare (<i>familjedaghem</i>)	
6/7**		Pre-school classes (<i>förskoleklasser</i>)	Municipal (<i>kommunala</i>)	Independent (<i>fristående</i>)	Open after-school (<i>öppen fritidsverksamhet</i>) >12 years old	
6/7-15/16	Primary (including lower secondary) Compulsory attendance	Primary school (<i>grundskola</i>)	Independent (<i>fristående</i>) - general or specialized profile: - Waldorf, Montessori - International - Language/ Minorities ... - Confessional		Youth leisure-time (spaces and activities) -Fritidsgård (e.g. Blå huset, Tensta) - Ungdomsgårdar -Ungdomskaféer	
15/16-18/19					Secondary	Upper secondary school (<i>gymnasiet</i>)

* Medical and social service support from the municipality and social services

** Until school-start, depending when children are born

Abbreviations and terms

AKK, *Alternativ och kompletterande kommunikation* – alternative and complementary communication (program for the disabled)

AMS – *arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* / The Labour Market Board

AMU, *arbetsmarknadsutbildning* – Labour-market related education

AVET – Advanced vocational and educational training

KY – *kvalificerad yrkesutbildning*, **yrkesvux** / skilled vocational training

Basår – basic (preparatory) year

BO – *Barnombudsmannen*, The Children's Ombudsman

BEO – *Barn- och elevombudsmannen*, The Children's and school students' / Pupils' Ombudsman

CFL – *Centrum för flexibelt lärande* /Center for learning flexible /education

DO – *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen* /The Office of the ombudsman against [ethnic and religious]* discrimination

* The earlier office, until 2008. Since January 1st 2009, there is only one (general) Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination (on all grounds earlier covered by 4 specialized anti-discrimination Offices mentioned below: JämO, HO, HomO)

HO – *Handikapp ombudsmannen* /The ombudsman against discrimination based on functional disorders/ handicap

HomO – The ombudsman against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation

JämO – *Jämställdhetsombudsmannen* / The equal opportunities ombudsman;

Folkbidning – liberal adult education sector

Folkhögskola – Folk High-school,

Folkbildning – liberal adult education, non-formal and voluntary

Folkbildningsrådet -The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

Förskola – pre-school

Öppen förskola – open pre-school

Förskoleklass – pre-school class (6-7 years' old, the year preceding the first school year)

Familjedaghem – family daycare

Fritidshem - after-school recreation centre [for junior school children]

Fristående skola – independent/ private school

Grundskola - nine-year [compulsory] school, elementary school

Gymnasiet - Britt. (approx.) [comprehensive] upper secondary school; Amer. (approx) [senior] high school

Gymnasieskola – upper secondary school, high-school

Gymnasial utbildning – upper secondary education

Gymnasieskolans individuella program – secondary education's individual program

Gymnasial komvux – upper secondary adult education form

Gymnasial vuxenutbildning – upper secondary adult education

Högskola – university college

Kommun – Municipality

Komvux - kommunal vuxenutbildning, municipal adult education

Grundläggande komvux – basic municipal adult education

Påbyggnad komvux – advanced municipal adult education

Landsting – County council

Licentiat - licentiate

Lärling - apprentice

Lärlingsutbildning – apprentice education

Läroverket – (hist.) former equivalent to *Skolverket*; former [State] secondary grammar school

Länsstyrelsen - County administrative board

Lärarlyftet – Teacher's (knowledge) lift (program)

NU, *nationella utvärderingen* – national evaluation (by the National Agency for Education)

Näringsliv(et) – Economic activity /*Svenskt näringsliv* – Confederation of Swedish Enterprises

Preparandprogrammen - preparatory program

Påbyggnadsutbildning – advanced education (post-secondary education)

Påbyggnadsyrkesutbildning - advanced vocational education (post-secondary education)

REDAH- centers /*Center för databaserade hjälpmedel* – Center for data-based help-means

Sameskolan – the Saami school

Sametinget – The Saami Parliament

SFA – *Svenska för akademiker* / Swedish for immigrants with academic qualifications

SFI – *Svenska för invandrare*/ Swedish for (adult) immigrants

SIH - *Statens institut för handikappfrågor i skolan*/ The state's institute for handicap issues in school

Skolverket - Swedish National Agency for Education

Specialskola – Special school

SOU – *Statens offentliga utredningar* / (litt.) ”The state's official reports”, Official Committee Reports that precede legislation changes or adoption of new legislation in Sweden

SPSM, *Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten* - The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (from July 1st 2008)

Särskola - special school [for mentally handicapped children]

Särvux - special school for adult education [for mentally handicapped adults]

SSV – Statens skola för vuxna

Studieförbund – Study Associations (for open, liberal adult education)

Träningskolan – training school

Universitetet - university

VAL – *Vidareutbildning av obehöriga lärare*/ Further education of unqualified teachers, i.e. persons working as teachers but do not have a pedagogical exam

Vuxenutbildning – adult education

Grundläggande vuxenutbildning – basic adult education

Yrkesutbildning – vocational training

Yrkesvux – vocational training for adults