



SWEDEN

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Sweden is using ESF funding to achieve its aim of full employment and a more cohesive society. Education and training initiatives are helping disadvantaged groups, such as the low-qualified, to obtain skills and get into jobs. Sweden is also helping employers and workers to acquire the modern skills and competences they need to ensure sustainable growth in the future.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWEDEN

Sweden is recovering well from the economic crisis and is making full employment its goal. The Swedish government considers that jobs are fundamental to well-being - providing wealth, a sense of belonging and the opportunity for people to chart their own lives. Furthermore, as the lack of a job is seen as the primary reason for social exclusion, Sweden's determination to boost employment is also the key weapon for reducing poverty, ensuring fair chances for everyone, and building a more cohesive society. To achieve this goal, it is responding to a number of challenges on the path to full employment. One of these is the need to improve the job prospects of young people who leave school with few or no qualifications. It is this group that is benefiting least from the recovering employment rate, and this is often particularly true for young people with recent immigrant backgrounds. Furthermore, an increasing number of Swedish companies across all sectors are reporting difficulties in recruiting the qualified staff they need to meet demand - so education and vocational training must be reinforced to offer workers the skills they need to



"Full employment is the top priority"

participate and benefit from economic growth. Long-term unemployment is an important problem among older people, immigrants, disabled people and the low-qualified, so efforts are needed to bring these groups into the labour market and give them the tools to avoid the trap of poverty and social exclusion. Sweden has adopted a Roma strategy extending from 2012 to 2032. The overall goal of the Swedish Roma strategy is that a Roma who turns 20 years of age in 2032 should have the same opportunities in life as a non-Roma.

ESF spending in Sweden

For 2007-2013, Sweden is receiving EUR 691 million in ESF funding. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to over EUR 1.3 billion. ESF programme spending priorities are focused on education and training to provide more people with the chance to find employment, and to give them the skills and qualifications they need to keep their job or get the new job they want.

SWEDEN'S ESF PRIORITIES

Fair access to jobs

Already, over 700 ESF supported projects have been launched to help people facing particular obstacles to work to find a job and participate more in society. The aim is to support over 75 000 such people with training opportunities, counselling and guidance. One example is the 'New City' project in Malmö that uses personal coaching to help unemployed young people to find a job and integrate better - it aims to support some 900 young people, and 450 have already found work. Likewise, Skåne County offered training and company internships to young unemployed people with the result that over 60% went on to jobs or further training. This initiative proved so successful that it has been copied by other municipalities. The 'Mellansprånget' project in Göteborg focused on coaching, training and counselling for people with learning difficulties to help them find suitable jobs with the co-operation of local businesses. And for recent immigrants. in the 'Jobs Point West Örebro' project a local housing association helped its unemploved tenants to find the training, language skills and job contacts they needed - over 240 tenants took part and more than half went on to work or further training.

"Towards a brighter labour market"

Better job skills, better business

ESF projects are encouraging employers and entrepreneurs to help their workers get the better skills they need to improve performance, adaptability and job prospects. Over 1200 projects for training and improving skills have been granted funding – and the aim is to offer such opportunities to 240 000 women and men. An example is a project in Nybro to give local retailers new marketing and management skills to improve their performance. And in Stockholm, a training programme developed by the Corporate Academy helped companies develop export plans and find suitable business partners in Portugal to boost their exports. For the public sector, which is facing a loss of valuable experience as many staff approach retirement, the 'Competence Bridge' project used networking, benchmarking and competence development, among other techniques, to build the skills and aspirations of young people for work in public administration across eight municipalities. And for small enterprises of up to nine people, a popular project in Stockholm offered low-cost courses in leadership, communications and marketing to owners and employees - over 2200 took part, including many women and immigrant entrepreneurs.

"Taking responsibility for jobs"

THE ESF IN SWEDEN: SOME EXAMPLES

A factory for work opportunities

In Åmål, 'Work Factory' was a successful project for getting young unemployed people into work, further studies or training. It targeted youngsters between the ages of 16 and 25 on state welfare or municipal support. Participants took part in various training exercises for a three-month period, learning important skills. These included writing a CV and cover letter, interview techniques, improving their self esteem. health and fitness exercises and visits to companies and schools. The success rate was high, reaching approximately 60%. Of these, 38% found work, 13% started studying and 8% received vocational training.

Training better nurses

The 'Kravmärkt yrkesroll' project developed in-service training for health-care staff to develop skills and improve quality assurance. It addressed the needs of nursing staff based on the new demands in the work place, first seen with the rising numbers of elderly patients and cases of dementia. Marie Ardström, the manager of 'Kravmärkt *yrkesroll*', explains: "There was a gap between what the students learned on the healthcare programme at their upper secondary school and the skills actually needed for geriatric care. It is easy to forget how much responsibility this occupational group has - a mistake made when medication is given can have dire consequences."



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