

Country Report SWEDEN

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1. Background and country context

In Sweden the Parliament (Riksdagen) is the country's highest decision-making body. Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities (kommuner), and 21 county councils (landsting), including the municipality of Gotland, which does not have its own county council.

In recent years it has become increasingly clear that unemployment among certain groups (e.g. youth and recent immigrants) presents new challenges for the education and training system. There is a need for a better match between education and training outputs and labour market needs. It has also become increasingly clear that there has been too little emphasis on vocational education and training (VET). To this end, the Government has introduced a new form of advanced vocational education (www.ky.se) and will improve the quality of VET at the upper secondary level in association with the new upper secondary system from the autumn of 2007. There is also agreement that language training for immigrants needs to be improved.

The Swedish education and training system is highly decentralised. The decision-making power lies mainly with the local administration, even the teacher salaries and workloads are negotiated locally.

Upper secondary vocational education and training has been provided in the same institutions as general upper secondary education since the 1970s. Within these, vocational programmes are offered. Also adult education often share the same buildings (workshops, classrooms etc.) and many teachers teach in both institutions.

The introduction of a new upper secondary apprenticeship training programme has been proposed as an alternative within national vocationally oriented programmes at upper secondary school. This apprenticeship training will have the same knowledge goals as school-based programmes and provide the pupils with good knowledge in the school's core subjects and programme-specific subjects. Six pilot schools experiment this for the launching of the apprenticeship training programme nationwide in July 2007.

Apprenticeship training will be introduced. The rationale is that the quality of VET must be improved. Enterprises need qualified and skilled workers whose competences match the needs of the labour market. Enterprises must take responsibility for high quality education, but they will also receive funding and a better qualified work force.

The training will be introduced in autumn 2008. There will be the option for the students to reduce the proportion of general subject studies. However, they will have to acquire a minimum of general studies, enabling them to build on these later to gain eligibility for higher education. According to expert interview 8 million euros will be provided by the state for the training of trainers in apprenticeship training.

2. How is the work and training of trainers organised?

On-the-job learning has recently been introduced in Sweden. In a pilot experiment, part of the curriculum (approx. 30 per cent) for a national programme is replaced by lärande i

arbetslivet = LIA (learning at work), which includes hands-on/workplace training. For this form of specially designed programmes it is presumed that the workplace provides the trainers they find suitable for the task - no general requirements exist for the trainers.

When work place-based education is part of a continuation course, the workplace is likewise presumed to provide the trainers.

In advanced vocational training (KY) the only requirement is that "Teachers and trainers are to be competent for the teaching they are to provide, either by education or by experience".

In a pilot project for apprenticeship training for adults, the trainers "must be professional craftsmen and each of them is approved by the respective crafts organisation". Trainers are considered formally external but nevertheless a part of the educational system.

Although no formal, initial, pre-service training exists for IVET and CVET trainers, some facilitators offer introductory courses for trainers. The way the trainers have been introduced varies, the extremes being a three-day basic education within school for new trainers on the one hand, and four-hour information after work on the other. Distance education via Internet has been used in some cases. According to the surveys, the main focus of these introductory courses has been the objectives for the workplace-based training. According to expert interview, the work with training of trainers will start in a year or two.

3. How is the work and training of trainers financed?

When introducing the apprenticeship in 2008 there are some plans for funding. Enterprises that receive, train and instruct trainees will receive funding from the municipality. The funding must be used both for the training of the trainees as well as the trainers. The municipality will receive 25,000 Swedish crowns per year and apprenticeship place. Altogether the investment will be 515 million SEK in three years. Of this funding 450 million SEK is reserved for the apprenticeship training and 75 million SEK for the training of trainers.

4. How are trainers selected and how are human resources allocated?

Employers are free to allocate the trainer they see appropriate. Cf above point 2).

5. How are trainers qualified?

Cf above point 2).

6. How is the reputation of trainers and how are they integrated in enterprises/society?

According to the expert interviews the appreciation of trainers and vocational training as well could be higher.

7. How innovative is the work and training of trainers?

It seems that the role of the trainers varies depending on the company. There is no exact information on the methods the trainers use.