

Actual stage of school abandons in Sweden

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Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to give evidence upon the actual, official situation concerning the school abandon in the countries involved in the multilateral Grundtvig project Back to school. Except from Sweden, Belgium, Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, Romania and Turkey take part in the project. The Swedish survey report contains official data concerning the school abandon at Upper Second school level as well as data concerning school abandon at Adult Education. The report also contains comments on the official reported figures, reasons of school abandon, different ways for reintegration and specificities.

Actual official data:

Upper secondary education is provided by municipalities, county councils and independent principal organisers. It consists of 17 national programmes. Municipalities are obliged to offer all young people resident there. In 2007 88,6 % of the pupils who left compulsory school were eligible to begin at different national programmes in Upper secondary school. Young people, 11,4 %, more boys than girls, who had not been admitted to a national programme because they didn't meet the eligibility requirements; pass marks in Mathematics, Swedish and English are to be offered education in a specially designed or individual programme.

However in 2007 12 % of young people 18-24 year didn't have an upper secondary school leaving certificate.

About 18 000 pupils who left Upper secondary school without a leaving certificate in spring 2005 continued to municipal adult education, in the school year 2005/2006. More women than men did so, 20,4 and 13,6 percent respectively although more men than women left upper secondary school without a leaving certificate. Pupils with foreign background without a leaving certificate from upper secondary school continued to municipal adult education school year 2005/2006 to a higher degree than pupils with Swedish background without leaving certificate. Among these pupils with foreign background there were fewer men than women who did return to school directly after upper secondary school

Municipal adult education consists of basic adult education, upper secondary education and supplementary education. According to the Education Act every citizen in a municipality is entitled to partake in basic adult education from and including the second half of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 20, if they lack any of the skills that would normally be acquired in compulsory school.

Totally 21,4 % interrupted their courses at municipal adult education, more men (24,4 %) than women (20,0 %) . Pupils born abroad did interrupt their course/courses to a higher degree (23,4 %) than pupils born in Sweden (20,3 %). The highest proportion of course participants who dropped out of courses during the school year 2005/2006 was in basic adult education where 27,4 percent discontinued the course. They mostly dropped out from courses in Mathematics and English. At upper secondary education level in adult education 20,8 percent

interrupted their courses. The course participant at that level mostly dropped out from Mathematics, Swedish and English. As a whole men dropped out of courses more than women i.e 23,8 percent as opposed to 19,5 percent.

School year 2005/2006, 11 % of the pupils didn't attain the goal of basic eligibility for university and higher education. Fewer men than women attained the goal. Pupils with foreign background attained the goal to a lower degree than those pupils with Swedish background.

The comments are:

Those who drop out from compulsory school, more boys than girls, lack pass marks in Mathematics, Swedish and English.

More men than women left upper secondary school without a leaving certificate.

Less men than women continued their studies in municipal education directly after upper secondary school in order to qualify for an upper secondary school leaving certificate.

Pupils with both foreign background and no leaving certificate, fewer men than women, did continue directly to municipal adult education after upper secondary school to a higher degree than pupils with Swedish background and no leaving certificate.

More men than women interrupted their courses at municipal adult education and they mostly dropped out from courses in Mathematics and English.

More pupils left basic level than upper secondary level in adult education.

More pupils born abroad than pupils with Swedish background interrupted their courses at municipal adult education.

Reasons:

The pupils drop out from adult education courses because they have found a job and it's more important for those pupils to work than to study. Another reason could be that a lot of pupils work beside they study and the pupils lack support and understanding from the employer to study and complete their courses. Some pupils also miss support from their families and friends. The pupils sometimes miss opportunities to interact and communicate with teachers and other pupils in a learning environment and think it's hard to study on their own. If the pupils are not used with studies it could be difficult to plan and organise their studies by themselves and they drop out. Some pupils mean that the organisation and structure of the courses causes their drop out from studies.

In a newly made investigation (2007) made by Statistics Sweden (SCB) amongst youth who began upper secondary school in autumn 2000 but didn't complete it half of the men and one in three women gave the reason "tired of studying". Another reason to drop out was physical or mental illness.

The teachers within adult education has to deal with many drop outs and a high degree absence among the pupils. According to the andragogical principles adults are responsible and motivated to learn by nature. But studies show that there is a distance between the ideal adult pupil and the actual one. The adult educators have to take on both the responsibility and motivational work. A majority of the educators perform motivational work through pedagogical and social actions. For teachers it can be difficult to balance between teaching and caring. Sometimes the educational assignment becomes secondary to the social one. Some adult teachers think that the educational assignment should come first and find the situation frustrating.

Different ways of reintegration:

According to the Education Act every citizen in a municipality is entitled to partake in basic adult education from and including the second half of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 20, if they lack any of the skills that would normally be acquired in compulsory school. That's one way to reintegrate a group who stand outside the formal education system.

In Sweden we have found that there is a need of a better education for teachers. Evaluations has shown that only 88,6 % of the pupils were eligible to begin at different national programmes (Upper Secondary School). 63 % of all 20-year-olds had attained the goal of basic eligibility for university and higher education. An investigator shall on behalf of the Swedish Government prepare a proposal to a new Teacher Education Programme. The proposal should focus on the goal, structure, scope, dimensions and steering of the Teacher Education. The investigator shall show the result of the investigation 15 sep 2008 to the Government. A better Teacher Education Programme will give the teacher better tools to help the pupils to stay in school and obtain their certificates.

In Sweden the national evaluation of the compulsory school in 2003 (NU-03) reveals that in several different respects students subject knowledge is now poorer than reported in 1992 and 1995. To reverse the negative trend in the school system, the Swedish Government wants to support continuing professional education for teachers. Focus will be on reinforcing teacher's knowledge of their subjects and enhancing their teaching abilities that will lead to more students achieving the objectives. Some 30 000 fully qualified teachers will be offered a chance to study at a higher education institution (Lärarlyftet). During their studies they will receive 80 per cent of their current pay.

Pupils think it's hard to study and work at the same time. Some pupils can't manage it and drop out from their courses. Perhaps cooperation between Adult Education providers, different places of work and labour unions will lead to that the employers will support and encourage their employees to study and complete their courses, especially those who need to complete their courses at basic and upper secondary level in adult education.

Perhaps every citizen in a municipality should be entitled to partake in upper secondary adult education from and including the second half of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 20, if they lack any of the skills that would normally be acquired in upper secondary school not like it is today; the municipalities shall strive to arrange upper secondary, adult education that meet the needs and demands of the city. If that should be possible, that every citizen should be entitled to partake in upper secondary adult education, it had to be written in the Education Act.

Some pupils think that it's hard to study on their own so I think pupils must learn to learn. Perhaps we should focus more on that competence in school in the future. But not only in school, learning centres or guidance centres should perhaps offer opportunity for potential learners to obtain that ability in order to study and easier obtain their learning certificates. It's important to help learners to take one step up to a higher level in formal education system.

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