



VET STUDY VISIT KARLSTAD, SWEDEN

28 - 30 September 2011

Visit details

Study visit participants:

Stephen Beyer (expert from Wales)
Berthold van Leeuwen (Project Advisory Group)
Agneta Gustafsson (Representative Board Member from Sweden)
Eva Valtersson (expert from Sweden and host)
Marie Johnsson (expert from Sweden and host)
Mary Kyriazopoulou (European Agency staff member)

Programme:

1st day morning

Welcome, aims of the meeting and introduction to the current Swedish Vocational Education System



The VET study visit team

The meeting started with a welcome by the Municipal Commissioner, Chairman of the



Board of Education, Niklas Wikström and a presentation from the Karlstad Municipality. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the meeting in terms of exchanging and sharing experiences, getting new ideas, knowledge and inspiration and learning from each other.

Karlstad is a university town with 86.000 inhabitants and 12.000 students. 17.000 children and young people are in compulsory education. It is also a touristic and conference city with the maximum number of days sun shine in Sweden. There are 7 lakes in the city and 22.000 islands.

Priority is given to helping children with SEN to cope at school and be integrated into the labour market. They believe that society will benefit from the integration of people with SEN in the long term. The Municipal Commission is responsible for education.

A reporter from a local newspaper VARMLANDS FOLKBLAD participated in the first part of the meeting and carried out an interview for an article about the meeting to be published the following day.

An introduction was then given on the aims of the study visit, namely, to understand **What** Works well and **why** in the selected example.

Introduction to the current Swedish Vocational Education System and coming Proposed Reforms, by. Marie Törn, Ministry of Education and Research.

An overview of the Swedish educational system was presented from preschool to higher education with a focus on who is responsible for schooling, post-secondary VET and higher education. The responsibility is shared across three levels: the government; the municipalities, the schools, the higher VET providers, the higher education institutions and the Swedish Agency for education, the Swedish schools inspectorate, the Swedish Agency for higher VET, the Swedish Agency for Higher education.

The VET policy challenges in Sweden are:

- Ensuring VET meets industry skills needs, at both the upper and post-secondary levels
- Giving adults a chance to upgrade skills or change careers
- Increasing upper secondary VET completion rates
- Ensuring and developing high quality work-based training
- Ageing population – skills shortages. Critical role for VET to train young people and adults to meet labour market needs,



- The status of VET in SE must be improved, partly due to an (over) emphasis on higher education in recent decades.

VET challenges – VET reforms in upper secondary school:

- Several reforms to make VET more attractive
- System of integrated upper secondary school moves to 3 paths in 2011: 1) academic; 2) vocational; and 3) apprenticeship.
- Programme Councils for VET programmes to ensure upper secondary VET is relevant, reflects current skills needs and ensures quality work-based training. Apprenticeship Councils at national and local levels for apprenticeship training.
- Several initiatives for VET teachers.

In Sweden there are no statistics available at the individual level concerning pupils in SNE, due to the legislation. The Swedish Data Legislation aims to prevent the violation of personal integrity in the process of personal data (Personal Data Act) and prohibits to process data concerning health.

Some figures are available on employment in the open labour market for people with learning disabilities, both with and without support.

Without support	With support
<u>70s</u>	<u>70s</u>
15-20%	60%
<u>1984</u>	<u>1984</u>
10%	43%
<u>2006</u>	<u>2006</u>
3%	17%

86% of all children go to pre-primary school at 1 year old. Compulsory school is from 7-16 years old. Upper secondary school is from 16-19 years old. The drop out rate up to 16 years old is very low.

Reforms in upper secondary schooling will be implemented from this year.

In the old system, there were 17 national programmes – 13 vocational programmes and 4 for preparing for higher education. All these programmes provided access to higher education. 40% of students go to universities.

According to the new upper secondary system, there are 19 national programmes – 12-13 of these are VET programmes do not provide a route to university.

Interest in VET has increased so particular emphasis is being placed on it. 1,9 of all students follow special programmes.

Funding: the budget goes/travels with the student.

There are 150 folk-high schools that are mainly residential.

Additional information:

- Policy framework with national goals, but decentralisation of responsibilities at Municipality/local school level. Clear responsibilities are allocated at every level so agencies know who is responsible for what aspects of VET
- There are two Schools/Forms within the Upper School system, one for SEN
- Education Act 1985 and 2011, National Curriculum and Syllabus with reform expected for 2013 with the aim of increased flexibility in programmes. Option for better mixing of students with and without SEN within one set of buildings- two schools remain, but better links will be possible
- A formally stated vision in legislation that inclusion in the labour market is the goal
- Flexibility at the local level to adapt curricula to individual needs
- Adequate funding to deliver VET to SEN young people- higher staff: student ratios exist here than in the wider Upper School. In Karstad there is good investment by the Municipality to help it work
- Existence of a wage subsidy for these young people, equivalent to 50%-80% of salary

(see [Presentation VET-system-in-SE.pdf](#))

1st day afternoon

Visit Nobelgymnasiet and discussion with the Principal and staff



The hosting team in Karlstads-Hammarö gymnasiesärskola: the Development Manager, Anna Hägerdal Teacher, Ann-Ci Hermansson Teacher, Lena Svensson Teacher, Staffan Thörne Teacher, Åke Tomt Coordinator, Peter Lundin Career master, Gunilla Jonsson Career master, Lena Blomqvist adviser and Peter Mårtensson Development manager.

The Development Manager and the staff presented the school and its activities, focusing on organisation and management, the programmes, the student's path from practice to work and the Bryggan (the model to support the students during their 4- years of studies and in the transition to working life).

In total, the Karlstads - Hammarö gymnasieskola (upper secondary school)has got:



- Number of schools: 5
- Number of students: 4300
- Number of staff: 800
- Number of programmes: 25
- Number of programmes, the gymnasiesärskola (special programmes for students with SEN): 8

The Nobelgymnasiet, which is part of the The Karlstads - Hammarö gymnasieskola (upper secondary school)has got:

- Number of students: 1087
- Number of staff: 140
- Number of programmes: 5
- Number of programmes, the gymnasiesärskola (special programmes for students with SEN): 3

In almost every upper secondary school, there are special programmes for students with learning disabilities.

The main mission of the gymnasiesärskola (upper secondary school for students with SEN is: The Gymnasiesärskola shall on the basis of each pupil's preconditions deepen and develop the pupil's knowledge as part of the preparation for a meaningful life as an adult at work, in practical living and leisure activities" (Education Act)

The principal's special responsibility for the gymnasiesärskola:

- Each student is given support in education relating to a place of work, APU
- Each student is given support in the transition from school to working life

In the MMS = Human – Environment –Service, there are 29 students, 27 girls and 2 boys. The number of staff is 8.

Profiles at MMS: Children and Care, Service and Cleaning.

The four years at MMS:

- Year one – Basic year
- Year two – The student's profile starts
- Year three
- Year four

The Student's Path from Practice to Work:From Compulsory Comprehensive School to the Gymnasiesärskola:

- Information about the Gymnasiesärskola



- Choice of programme for practice
- The student visits the schools
- Practice
- Evaluation
- Choice of school and programme
- Handover conference

How to attain a meaningful adult life in Work, Housing and Leisure:

Civics: Communications, job centre, everyday economics

Social training: Social skills and interaction, hygiene. what you need to think about before APU

Core Subject: In order to create an overall picture of education for the students, integration between the different vocational courses is necessary. Integration between vocational subjects and core subjects is also important and strengthens education. (National Agency for Education), practical maths, practical swedish, entrepreneurship

APU - Education relating to a place of work:

- Connected to the programme
- Prepare the students for working life
- Make connections
- Bryggan

The EU-project "Bryggan" (1999-2000) aims to:

- Increase employability
- Reduce welfare dependency
- Enhance self-esteem

The project started with 22 students and 2 career masters.

Main results of the EU project:

- 41% of the graduates found a job within the open labour market
- 32% went to a prolonged practice, with employment in the long run
- 27% were not ready for the labour market and needed further support and other alternatives

Bryggan of today:

- *196 students divided among 8 programmes*
- 3 ½ career masters during all four years
- 1 career master with special responsibility for the last year

Trades/Companies:

- Building firms



- Care of the elderly, child care
- Insurance companies
- Cleaning companies
- Computer companies
- Industry companies
- Trotting
- Farming
- Car repair companies
- Sports clubs
- Leisure sector
- Caretaking
- Trade companies
- Restaurants
- Transport
- Forest industry
- Road construction
- Advertising companies
- Sanitation

The newly reformed system is better because there are more levels. For the special programmes the reform starts in 2013.

For the special programmes, they are trying to balance the transition to work, leisure time and practical life.

In general, 1,9% of all students follow special programmes. Students with physical disabilities, blind students or deaf students are in mainstream schools. Students with down syndrome follow individual special programmes.

Their method is: they work a lot with adaptation of working time, technical aids, etc to make sure that students can get and keep a job. (e.g. part time job up to 6 hours per day).

Parents are informed and involved in the meetings with the public employment service, who are responsible for finding a job for the students who have completed the programmes.

Additional information:

- Tailor-made curriculum with a strong focus on the labour market
- Room for learning through doing
- Career Master (Career counselling, work experience and job finding, liaising with employer, low intensity support in the workplace, reflecting on work competences, liaison with family and others who care about the YP) is an important aspect of the project enabling work experience and transition to paid work
- Good links between the employer and the Career Master and teachers. This provides the employer with the confidence to employ people



- At local level, Career Master case load numbers are kept lower than may be found in other regions
- Two schools within one allows opportunities for mixing with peers closer than in some other systems. There is evidence of mixing, but it is dependent on School based actions
- Four year programme for young people with a learning disability, which allows for slower learning than peers (5th year possible)
- Relatively high numbers going into paid employment 50% in 2010
- Good joint working with Employment service
- The teachers carry out their own adaptations to the teaching materials in order to provide for different abilities.
- Training covers three aspects: labour market, housing and leisure (part of policy goal). There remains a need to guarantee the balance to ensure people move forward in citizenship, quality of relationships, home life and independence
- Use of a person centred planning technique
- Four year programme combining theory and practice allows individual growth
- Career Master to assist the young person at work and engage and support the employer. The project makes specific reference to using a Supported Employment model in their Bryggan (Bridge) approach.
- Stable team which has worked locally for a long time; the people are well known. This can help build networks and employer connections.
- Adaptation of curriculum to individual need
- Good demonstration of skills in tailoring teaching to difficult students (inviting independent action not directing, linking core curriculum to work placed example)
- Systematic method of developing work experience as a practical context for learning. This is progressive over time, with more work experience weeks in each year. Significant days include reflection on performance to development and support in the workplace from the Career Master and the staff in the workplace (the mentor).
- Established link to Employment Agency from 3rd year onwards, in order to provide on-going support post-graduation from project
- In general a significant wage subsidy is available. Both the project leaders and employers report that this is a significant help in finding a job.
- Teachers had University based teaching qualifications AND industry based experience (at least 5 years in industry)- Pedagogy qualification.
- Stability of the staff team is important for this project's success
- The project workers operate as a team, sharing information and problem solving (Teacher, Vocational Trainer, Careers Master, Co-ordinator (50%), arranging transition programme choices from Compulsory school to Upper School SEN)
- There is a special Development Manager linked to the Board, focusing on SEN
- Very motivated team and shared enthusiasm for employment



- 1:4 staff to student ratio creates much of the success, compared with 1:8 in mainstream Upper School

(see presentation [Karlstad.pdf](#))



2nd day

Visit MMS, Nobelgymnasiet FP and HR (special programmes), the Hotel and Restaurant Programme, workplaces, Naturum (nature information centre),

Participants had the opportunity to visit MMS – human environment service (special programme for students with learning disabilities) in Hammarö, the FP and HR (special programme for students with learning disabilities) in Nobelgymnasiet and discuss with teachers and students. Participants had lunch at the Hotel and Restaurant Programme, Nobelgymnasiet, prepared and served by the students.

The aim of the hotel-restaurant programme is to train students to prepare and serve dishes, do the cleaning, etc. There are 11 students. They have a restaurant to practice in which is open to school colleagues. The practice takes place during the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years. From a total of 8 national special programmes (national special curriculum) 3 are designed to meet the local needs of the labour market.

The aim of the vehicle programme is to train students to repair vehicles. Besides the vocational skills, social skills are also considered very important.

From a total of 200 students, 50% who completed the programmes have found a job, mainly part-time, in the open labour market. Their salary is subsidised in the range of 50-80%.

Participants then visited 2 workplaces (a car show room, a car repairs company and a pre-school institution) and discussed with employers and employees.

The Audi-Volkswagen-Skoda car show room and repair company has a total of 170 employees, 3 of whom are young people with learning disabilities who have graduated



from the special programmes. In total, 35 trainees have carried out their practical training in this company. They work in the department changing tyres, repairing and painting cars after an accident, maintenance, etc. Their salary is subsidised from 50 – 80%. The policy of the company is to employ people whose salary is subsidised.

The pre-primary school is for children from 1-5 (6) years old. There are 130 children and 25 staff. There are 7 groups by age (1-3, 3-5). There are 7 trainees and workers with learning disabilities in total. Their salaries are subsidised. They assist with the dishes, washing, children etc. The Director was very positive about the young trainees and employees and said that she had not experienced any problems so far.

Both employers find that the programme is supportive and provides good workers.

Young trainees and employees reported that the SEN programme had prepared them for their employment. There was evidence that students had selected this VET school as their preference. Students appeared to like the small group working in the programme

Visit to a workplaces



