



THE SWEDISH NATIONAL  
BOARD FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS  
[www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se)

# SUMMARY



# FOKUS08

The living conditions of young people in socially deprived neighbourhoods in Sweden

# Swedish youth policy in brief

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is a government authority. We work to ensure that young people (13 to 25 years of age) have access to influence and welfare. We do this by producing and communicating knowledge on young people's living conditions. We also distribute funding to the civil society in the form of support for organisations, projects and international cooperation. All the support we distribute is given on behalf of the Swedish government. The EU programme Youth in Action is a tool for practical youth policy at local, regional, national and European levels. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is the national office for Youth in Action.

## Actors and Structures in charge of youth in Sweden

The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality is responsible for the coordination of the Government's youth policy, issues affecting youth organisations and international cooperation in the youth field.

The Swedish youth policy approach is cross-sectoral. Several ministries are responsible for policy areas that concern young people, such as work, education, health, housing, culture, etc. Normally certain responsibilities will also be delegated to one or more government agencies within each policy area.

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is the government agency responsible for the follow up of the objectives set for the national youth policy by the Swedish Parliament. The Board produces and communicates knowledge about young people's living conditions and supports municipalities in the development and implementation of local youth policy.

The main duty of the Children's Ombudsman (*Barnombudsmannen*) is to promote the rights and interests of children and young people (up to the age of 18) as set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Other public bodies that have relevance for youth policy are among others the Swedish Public Employment Service [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se), The Swedish National Agency for Education [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se), The Swedish National Institute of Public Health [www.fhi.se](http://www.fhi.se), The Swedish Arts Council [www.kulturradet.se](http://www.kulturradet.se) and The Swedish Consumer Agency [www.konsumentverket.se](http://www.konsumentverket.se).

### Parliament commission in charge of youth issues

In the parliamentary committees the members of the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) prepare all decisions. The composition in each committee reflects the one of the parliament as a whole. After a committee has presented its proposal the members of the parliament adopt a position on the proposal. Youth issues are prepared in different committees depending on the specific issue.

### Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field

Sweden has 20 county councils/regions (18 counties and two regions) with competences in fields relevant for youth. They have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. The main task of the county councils/regions is health care. Some of the county councils/regions have, or have the last years had, specific projects for young people.

### Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

Sweden has 290 municipalities with local governments. There is no hierarchical relation between the municipalities and the regional public authorities. The local authorities have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation.

Many decisions that concern young people are taken at municipal level. Youth policy goals established by the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) are requirements for the central government but only advisory for the municipalities. Youth policy in municipalities can, if the municipalities wish so, start from the national objectives but the way it is executed in practice is shaped on the basis of local conditions. The municipalities are responsible for: water and sewerage, schools, spatial planning and building, health and environmental protection, refuse collection and waste disposal, rescue services, social services and security. Voluntary activities are: recreation activities, culture, housing, energy, industrial facilities and employment.

# Preface

The situation young people find themselves in and circumstances around their childhood and adolescence vary in our country. *Fokus 08* highlights the conditions for young persons who live in some of Sweden's poorest areas.

In December 2007 the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs carried out a thematic analysis of the living conditions of youth in socially deprived neighbourhoods and looked at how they perceive their situation vis-à-vis education and work. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is commissioned to follow up and highlight the development of the national youth policy, and *Fokus 08* is the fourth thematic analysis within the monitoring system which started with the national youth policy bill *Makt att bestämma – rätt till välfärd, The Power to Decide – The Right to Welfare* passed by the Riksdag in 2004.

The work with *Fokus 08* was carried out by Tiina Ekman, (PhD), Lidija Kolouh (PhD), Nils-Olof Zethrin (PhD student) and Daniel Wolgemuth (PhD). Inger Ashing and Susanne Zander also contributed to the report. Jenny Kallstenius (PhD student) and Petra Sundlöf (PhD) contributed basic data for the report.

A big thank you to everybody who took part in Göteborg, Järfälla, Malmö, Stockholm and Växjö, and especially to the 72 young people who told us about their lives – you have given us valuable knowledge about young people's circumstances.

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# Introduction

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs was commissioned by the government to make a thematic analysis of the living conditions of the young in socially disadvantaged areas, with special reference to education and work. The report will be used as an information basis for the Swedish government's youth policy and contains suggestions for policy alterations.

Various kinds of data sources has been used in *Fokus 08* to highlight the conditions of the young: Official statistics including the whole Swedish population from Statistics Sweden, material from the database GeoSweden at IBF (The Institute for Housing and Urban Research, Uppsala University) and from Skolverket (The Swedish National Agency for Education) and surveys made among students at four schools in the studied areas. In-depth interviews have been made with 60 young people in five primary and five secondary schools. In addition to this interviews with young people who took part in jobseeking activities and with about thirty public and municipal civil servants who work with youth issues in the studied areas.

*Fokus 08* highlights the situation in four socially deprived housing areas in Sweden: Araby in Växjö, Hjällbo in Göteborg, Husby in Stockholm and Rosengård in Malmö<sup>1</sup>. When choosing socially disadvantaged areas we have given special consideration to find areas where the young exhibit social deprivation. The housing areas have been selected from all of Sweden's 4 149 housing areas with at least 750 inhabitants. Three factors have governed the choice of area:

1. Proportion of young people leaving year 9 in primary school without appropriate qualification for entry into secondary school
2. Proportion of young people leaving secondary school without appropriate qualification for entry to university
3. Proportion of young people between 20-25 who are completely outside education and the labour market, i.e. who neither study, work nor have other work related means of support, for example parental insurance or sickness benefit.

# The studied areas

## Characteristics of the studied areas

The four housing districts we studied have many traits in common. All of them show generally low levels of income among the residents, and large proportions of residents in especially Rosengård, Araby and Hjällbo have long been dependent on income support. At least half of the inhabitants in these areas were born outside Sweden and at least one in ten have been in the country less than four years. Women, regardless of age, show more ill health and more income support dependency compared to men, and fewer are in work. Our survey of the situation among the young shows the same tendencies for young women, something which is important to acknowledge.

1. Distressed neighbourhoods have a young population. Half of the residents in Rosengård and Hjällbo are under 26 years of age, compared to 31 per cent in the rest of the country.
2. The number of young people born in Sweden varies sharply between the areas. Almost half of the young between 13 and 25 in Araby were born in Sweden, compared with about a quarter of the young in Rosengård.
3. Approximately 30 per cent of the young (20–25 years of age) in the whole country are students. There are more female than male students in Sweden. In Araby, Hjällbo and Rosengård the proportion of studying women was considerably higher than that of the men. 30–40 per cent of the young women were students and 25–30 per cent of the young men. In Husby the numbers were equal for men and women, around 30 per cent were students. There is then no great difference in the proportion of students in our distressed neighbourhoods and the country at large.
4. The proportion of young parents is considerably higher in the four studied districts compared with the country at large. In Rosengård 58 per cent of young women of 20 to 25 years of age have children, in Araby the corresponding figure is 35 per cent, in Hjällbo 30 per cent and in Husby 22 per cent. In the surrounding cities only about 10 per cent of the young women up to 25 years of age have children, with the exception of Malmö where the percentage is 17 per cent.
5. The number of people between 18 and 64 years of age who receive long term income support in Rosengård was 21 per cent, in Hjällbo 14 per cent, in Husby 8 per cent and in Araby 12 per cent, while the number in the whole country was 1,5 per cent in 2006.

## Young people's view of their housing area

Most young people feel comfortable in their housing area, both in our studied areas as in the whole of Sweden. This means that they like the neighbourhood and do not want to move until it is time to build a household of their own. But the fact that most young people like it there they live does not mean that there are no problems in the distressed neighbourhoods. We found instead that there are many negative elements in everyday life of the young, such as overcrowding and high mobility in parts of the housing stock, and many residents with some sort of social problems. On the other hand, the negative elements are somewhat balanced by things the young consider positive elements, such as good community spirit, nice courtyards, good access to play and spontaneous sports, and the security of knowing one's neighbours and to be recognised by most people.

1. Students in Arabyskolan, respectively Husbyskolan, like their own housing area the best. About 60 per cent of the pupils in these two schools say that they feel fine about their housing area. This can be compared to 55 per cent of all students in year 9 in the whole country.

2. Most young people want to stay in their area, except for Rosengård. The proportion who agree with the statement *as soon as I can I want to move to another housing area* is 21 per cent in Araby, 36 per cent in Husby, 28 per cent in Hjällbo and 39 per cent in Rosengård, compared with 19 per cent among all students in year 9 in the whole country.

3. Vandalism of various kinds occurs much more often in Rosengård, Husby and Hjällbo than in the rest of the country. The proportion who reports that the statement *vandalism (defacement, illicit graffiti, and destruction) is common in the housing area* is quite true or very true, is 13 per cent in the country at large, compared with 49 per cent in Rosengård, 57 per cent in Husby, 38 per cent in Hjällbo and 14 per cent in Araby.

4. Rumour mongering crops up in many of the interviews. The young find it difficult to handle the view that the surrounding world has of their area, they do not recognise the negative descriptions in media, where their area is depicted as dangerous and deviating from the surrounding society. The young feel that it is very unfair that the bad reputation their housing area carries also infects local activities such as schools, recreation centres and sport clubs, and that everybody who lives in the area is judged the same and gets a negative label. Many say that it is a minority who causes the negative responses while all others behave well.

# Education in socially exposed housing areas

The educational situation for youth in deprived areas should be discussed from at least two perspectives. One is an objective perspective where quantifiable differences are highlighted and analysed, for example differences in school reports and qualifications for secondary school or college/university. These facts are important as they offer an image of existing structural disparities between the young with differing socio-economic backgrounds. It is however, not possible to use a young person's ethnic background or home district as explanation for these differences. The quantifiable differences in student performance are explained by the concentration of socio-economically weak groups in certain areas.

The other perspective, which is of at least equal importance, highlights and discusses differences from a subjective angle. Structural conditions influence the image the young have of their future in a decisive way, both when it comes to education and work. What are the possible alternatives these youngsters feel they can choose between? Where in society do they feel they belong? It is by and large subjective experiences of what is possible to achieve, together with the place one belongs in, that guide the education choices of the

young (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977/1990). In some cases young people are aware of this influence, as when the interviewed students discuss ethnic discrimination as existing structural obstacles and restrictions. In other cases they are affected more unconsciously, as when education is seen either as a chance for a good life or as a waste of time.

The Swedish educational policy has for a long time strived to offer all children and young people equal education. Developments during the past years have, however, been marked by an increasing differentiation within the educational system and today there is a real socio-economic, ethnic and performance based segregation in schools, both in primary and secondary schools (Söderström & Uusitalo 2005, Bunar & Kallstenius 2007, SCB 2007). There is a socio-geographical dimension to variations in results between different schools, in other words, students' educational performances are affected by the student composition in the school, and the level of education of the majority of the parents in a school, and the geographical district of the school (Skolverket 2004). Young people growing up in socially deprived areas have a worse starting point compared with students who live in more affluent areas.

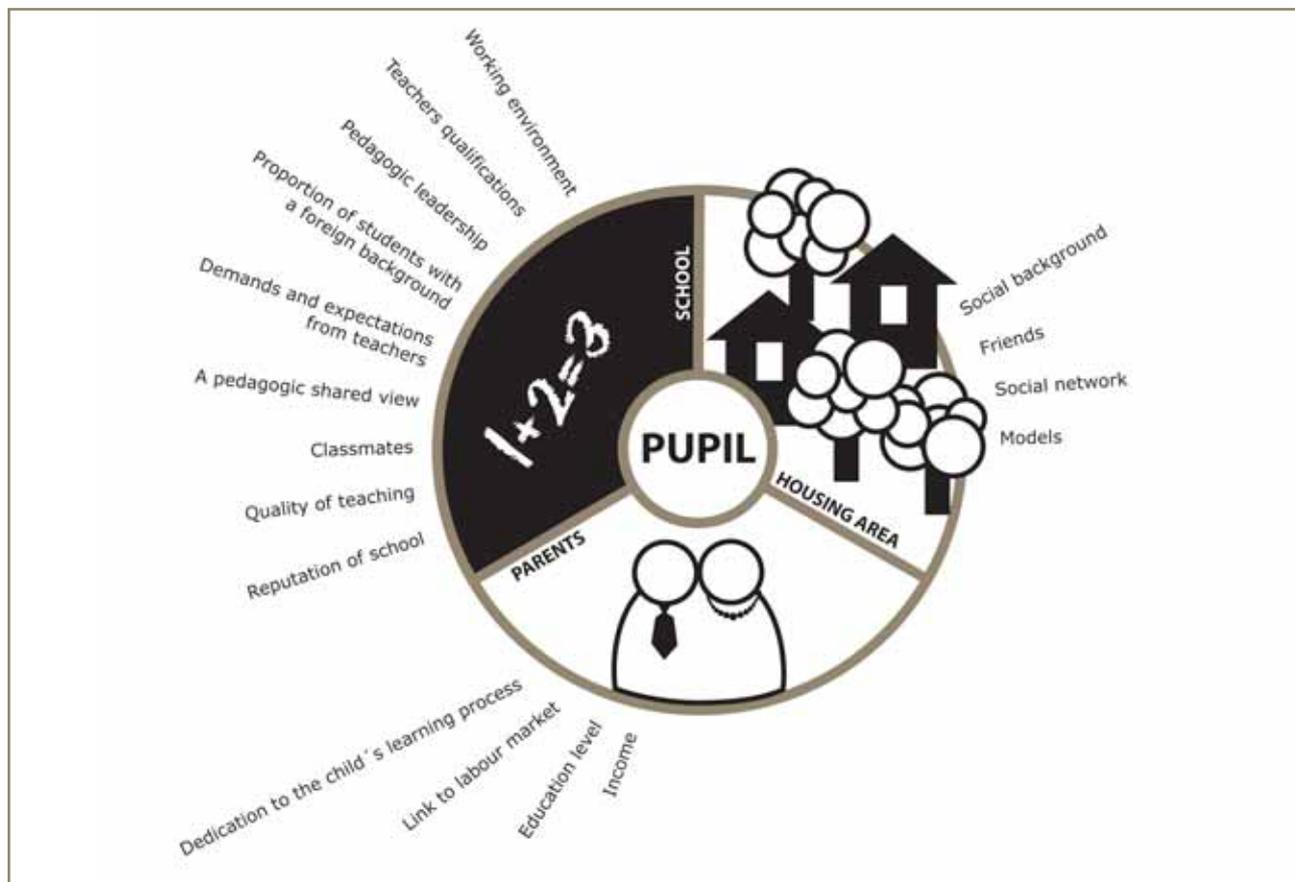


Figure1. Issues affecting student's motivation, learning process and educational performance.

## Young people in multicultural surroundings

Differences in society have partly a *social dimension*, that is, there are differences between various social groups, for example when looking at levels of education, levels of income and status in the labour market, and partly a *geographical dimension*, that is, segregation within for example housing and education systems are parts of the explanation as to why these differences arise (Bunar 2001, Eriksson 2005). This is where a discussion about existing differences within primary respectively secondary school must start.

The educational situation for young people living in socially deprived areas cannot be understood by looking only at their possible foreign background, socio-economic background factors, sex, or in what place they live *as such*. In many cases the young meet with the combined effects of ethnicity, class, gender and segregation linked to existing power structures in society (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005).

Young people growing up in heterogeneous multicultural environments develop inter-cultural skills. This kind of competence and experience should be desirable, considering that Swedish society, as a result of immigration and increased globalisation, becomes ever more multicultural. Young people testify to the opposite however. On a theoretical level, multiculturalism is given positive values, in politics and in various policy documents, but in practice the multicultural is, if anything, associated with problems and often connected to socially deprived suburban areas (Bunar 2004, Runfors 2003).

There is a mismatch between theory and practice in multiculturalism that has a clear socio-geographic link. And when year 9 students in our chosen schools worry about whether their grades will be good enough for them to "avoid having to go to a suburban school", other year 9 students in the deprived suburbs wonder if it is worth getting an education at all because of society's existing discrimination (Bunar & Kallstenius 2007).

## How can we explain existing differences?

We have studied four primary schools in socially exposed housing areas, and while the proportion of those students qualifying for national programmes is fixed on around 90 per cent in the country at large, it stays at around 60 per cent in three of our four schools in socially deprived areas.

Differences in school results, choice of courses and school can, to an extent, be explained by the individual's personal motives, such as learning ability

and motivation. However, earlier research shows that pedagogic work in the school, the parents' level of education, their position in the labour market, immigrant background and which area the family lives in, decisively affect both school performance and decisions about school and education (Skolverket 2004, Skolverket 1996, Skolverket 2003). How do these factors affect the educational situation of young people, and what do they mean for the young who grow up in socially deprived areas?

The parents' educational level affects in many different ways. Parents with less education many times find it hard to help with school-work that the pupils are expected to do at home (Lundqvist 2005). The education level might also affect the parents' attitude to the importance of higher education, which is then transferred to the children. Research shows how parents with a higher education often have better prerequisites for navigating the school system and relate to available choices. They have more access to information to help them choose schools and courses, alternatively influence their children's applications to schools and training that is beneficial to their educational careers (Skolverket 2003, Broady et al. 2000, Ball 2005, Skolverket 1996). Parents with less education have, to a greater extent, shown themselves to be willing to let social circumstances such as friends, recreational activities and proximity to the home affect decisions about school and education (Ball 2005, Gewirtz et al. 1995).

Young people's school performance and their attitudes towards higher education are also influenced by the parents' position in the labour market. Earlier studies reveal, however, conflicting images of what this influence looks like. There is research, based on statistical data, which shows that motivation to study amongst the young is affected negatively if their parents are not successful in the labour market (Arai et al. 2000). A highly educated parent who has difficulties in the labour market, such as unemployment, a low salary or some other dire terms, gives the young person an impression that there is no point in investing in school as education does not necessarily result in a good job.

But the situation could also make the young more motivated. Several studies of tertiary education show that young people born abroad, or whose parents were born abroad, experience strong motivation to, with the help of education, create a better life for themselves than that of their parents (Hilding 2000, Skolverket 1999, Sternudd 2003). Studies show that both young people of foreign background as well as their parents many times see education as a prerequisite for entry into the Swedish labour market, and this could be a motivation for investing in the school. There is however, disparity between having higher education as

a goal, and implementing this in reality, but it does not look as if the reason for this is a lacking in motivation to study among students with a foreign background (Skolverket 2004, Andersson 2001).

Another aspect of the parents' position in the labour market has to do with the family's disposable income. The parents' level of income affects the mobility of the family; spare time activities of children and youngsters and especially the area of habitation (see for example Eriksson 2005, Bunar & Kallstenius 2007).

How long a young person has been living in Sweden affects his/her educational results. Insufficient Swedish will affect the chances of profiting from the teachings (Skolverket 2004). Many parents often have deficient Swedish too, which makes it difficult for them to help with school work and other issues which have to do with school and education (Lundqvist 2005).

The social situations in which the young live thus affect school performance and educational careers. As discussed before, the socio-economic and ethnic segregation and living conditions is mirrored in the school system. Schools in socially deprived housing areas have a student composition which is marked by the fact that the students often grow up in socio-economically deprived families and that many of the students have a foreign background (Skolverket 2004). Young people who attend school in these areas tend to receive worse school results than do students in other schools. This can be explained by a so called *composition effect* which means that the socio-economic background among students in schools in socially deprived areas differ from that of students in schools with a lower proportion of students who have immigrated, or whose parents have immigrated to Sweden.

The fact that children and young people in schools in deprived areas show worse school results can also depend on a *contextual effect*. This means that, not just the individual's own social background, but also a situation specific to the school affects the results of individual students. An example of this is that the student's grades aligns itself with the average level of education of the parents' in the school (Skolverket 2005). Another example is that students in schools with an excess of 40 per cent students with a foreign background, on average achieve 10 grade-points less than students of a similar social background, but attending schools with less than 20 per cent students with a foreign background (Skolverket 2004).

Yet another important aspect is the *internal practice* of the school, that is, the real everyday work going on within the class-rooms. Research shows that school personnel, despite good intentions to treat all students alike, differentiate between students, both in theory and in practice. This could be about experiences and

knowledge the teacher brings forward as positive and gives credits to, how performances and behaviour is perceived and evaluated and how problems are handled (see for example Bunar 2004, Bunar & Kallstenius 2007, Lundqvist 2005, Runfors 2003). To give just one example, "ice skating" is a sports holiday activity which is emphasised and given space, in contrast to "learning to dance Kurdish dances".

Another example is that teachers act differently towards different students, that is, the performance of a student with a foreign background is called excellent despite the student's background, or that an act by students living in a deprived area is graded and handled differently from that of a student living in central Stockholm. Conflicts between school and home are explained as "cultural differences", when the family has a foreign background, instead of referring to them as individual problems (Bunar 2004).

Differences in relating can also be about what expectations teachers have on different students, what preconceived ideas and stereotypical images are linked to, for example, "immigrant boys", "girls from a different culture" and "students from the suburbs" (Bunar & Kallstenius 2007). This can result in experiences of both racism and discrimination, things which affect the self-image of the young and their relationship to "Swedishness" and society at large (Bunar & Kallstenius 2007, Runfors 2003). This again might be mirrored in their motivation to study and their school-work.

## The school situation in figures

Of a total of 1 588 schools (with years 7–9) in Sweden, 1 223 have a maximum of 20 per cent, and 1 476 a maximum of 50 per cent students with a foreign background. There are, in other words, 112 schools in Sweden where the proportion of students with a foreign background is higher than 50 per cent (figure 2).

The proportion of students with a foreign background varies between schools in our survey. In three of the schools, Hjällboskolan, Husbyskolan and Örtagårdsskolan (in Rosengård) the proportion is around 90 per cent while the share in Arabyskolan is around 40 per cent (figure 3).

The proportion qualifying for the national programme at secondary school has been lying steady at around 90 per cent during the past years in Sweden. As the student population in each individual school is relatively low, 50–100 students, the variations between different age groups are however greater when we look at individual schools. Örtagårdsskolan has, during 2004–2007, had a qualifying proportion of between 50 to 60 per cent, which can be considered a fairly normal variation for a school where the student composition varies considerably from year to year, for example depending on how long time newly arrived students have spent in Sweden and their previous schooling (figure 4).

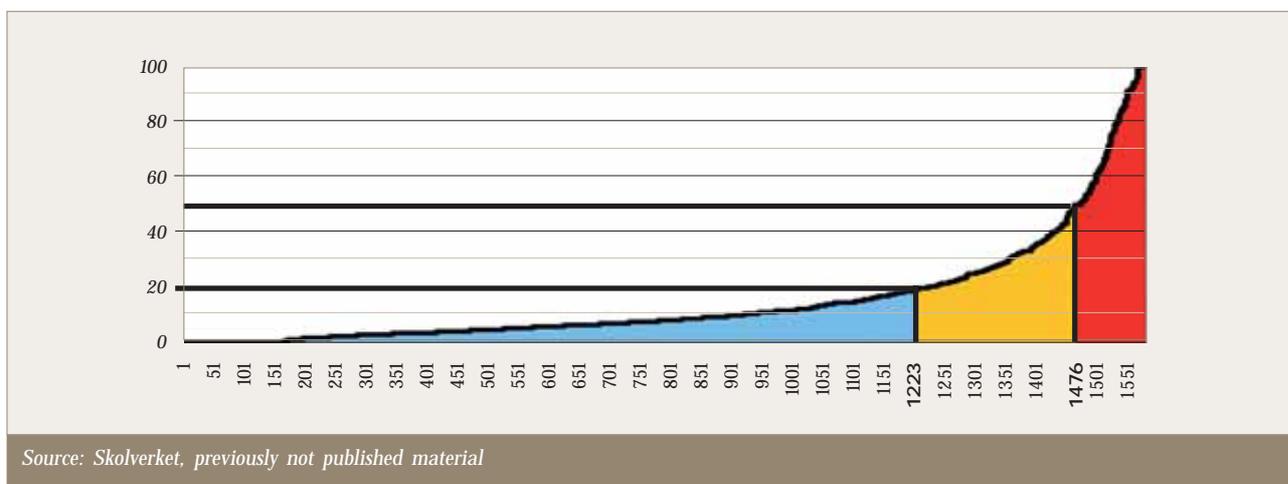


Figure 2. Proportion of pupils in Swedish primary schools (with years 7–9) with a foreign background 2007. Per cent.

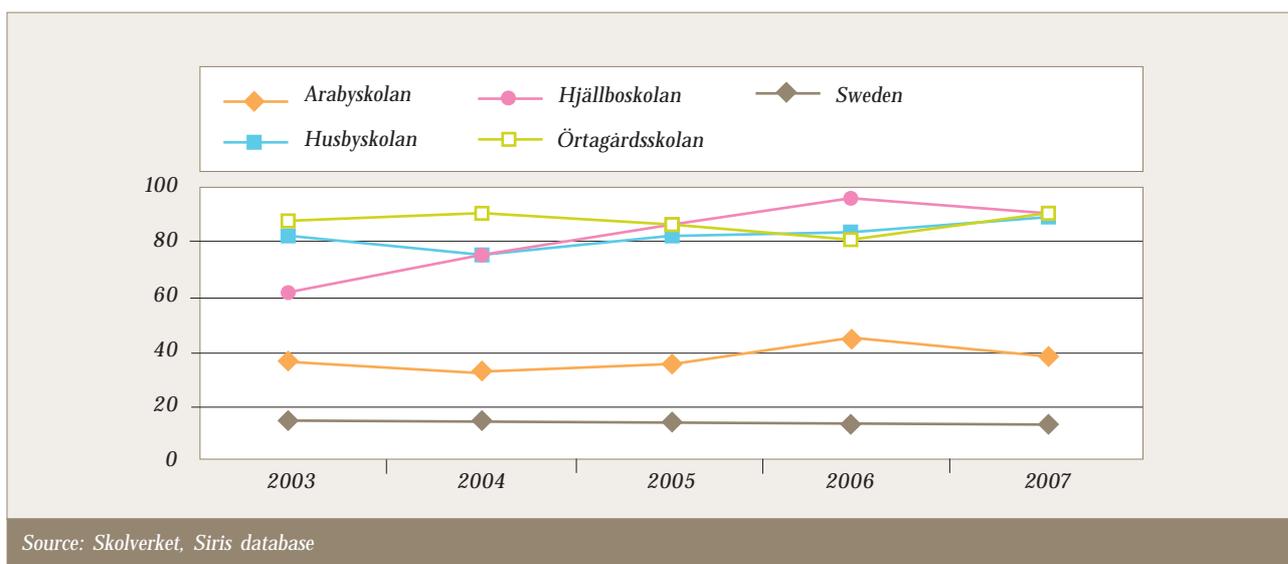


Figure 3. Proportion of students with a foreign background in year 9. Four schools compared with the whole country 2003–2007. Percentage.

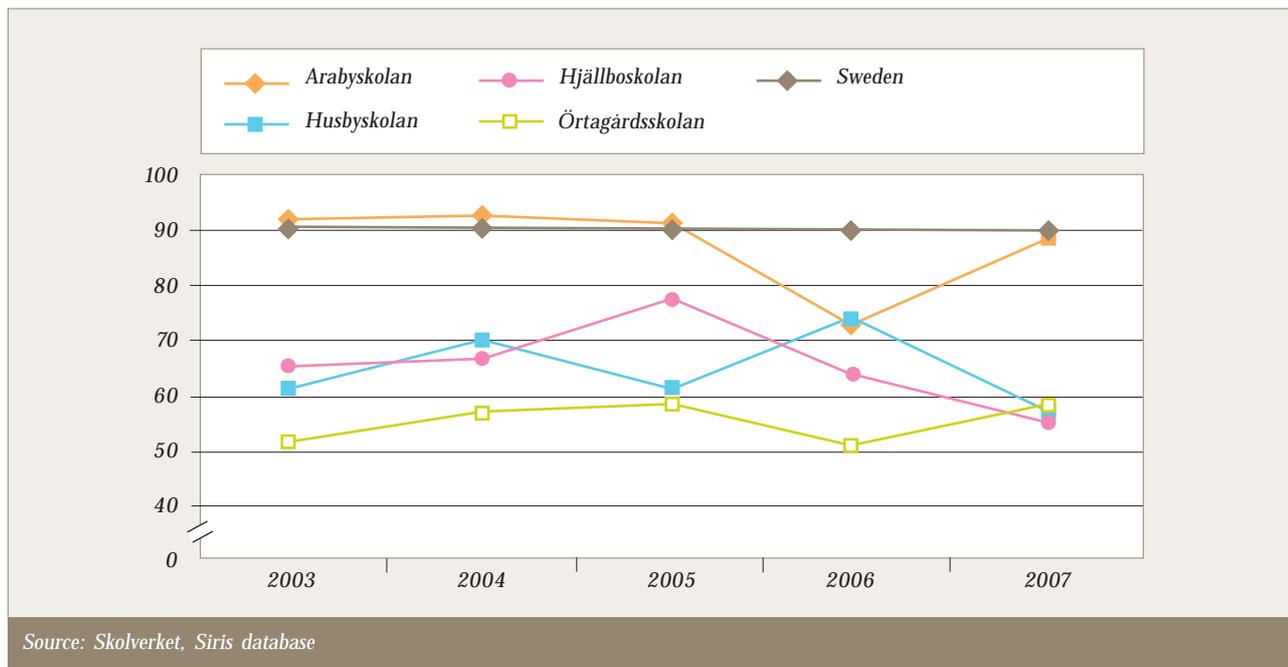


Figure 4. Proportion qualifying for studies at national programmes. Four schools compared with the whole country 2003–2007. Per cent.

Because parents, at least in the large city areas, increasingly choose to put their children in another school rather than in the one closest to home, we have analysed how far children in year 9 travel to their school. This is why we have studied how the distance to school in our chosen areas differs from distance to school among students in other types of housing areas.

A general conclusion is that at primary school level very few young people live far from their school and that the differences between male and female students are not especially large. The results show that, in total, only 3 per cent of the students travel 15 kilometres or more to school. Two thirds, 67 per cent, of students in year 9 attend school either in their own housing district or at the most 2 kilometres from home, 87 per cent of the students attend school within 6 kilometres from home.

Generally speaking, the same conclusions apply in all four studied areas Araby, Hjällbo, Husby and Rosengård. In all four areas a large proportion of year 9 students attend school within 2 kilometres from home.

#### Experiences and reflections by students and school personnel

To have good social relations to friends and teachers is essential for students' comfort and well-being, and for their good school performance. It is also important that the students feel that they are seen and that the adults in school pay attention. The interviewed students like their school, they feel secure and they like their teachers and friends. The students also stress that they feel at home in school because of the cultural mix. Despite this, many feel that it is difficult if their school has a bad reputation and some students have doubts as to how good their school really is. The students worry that they might not learn enough in school. A bad reputation does not strengthen self-confidence, rather the opposite. The reputation of a secondary school is also decisive when students discuss which school to choose. This reputation reaches students via media, siblings, friends or acquaintances of parents.

Our interviews provide a general picture of students satisfaction with their school. Most believe that their teachers are good, that teachers care and want them to succeed. Despite this generally positive picture of schools in suburbs of limited resources, there are many examples in our interview material that point to a tension between rumours mirroring the negative image the school has in the surrounding world, and the individual's experience of his/her school. The impres-

sion from the interviews is that the students have incorporated their school's bad reputation into their thinking and have a tendency to trust the rumours in the surrounding world rather than their own individual experiences.

### Bad reputation sticks

Many of the interviewed students have in common a feeling that the teachers are good and that there is good concord in the class, but at the same time they are unsure if their school is a good one:

*"It is better to choose a better school attended by Swedes, so that one learns something. Not like here: you get instructed but know nothing."*

Girl, year 8, Husbyskolan

Most of the students in the schools we visited have a foreign background, and many emphasize this as an aspect of security, they feel comfortable because of the cultural mix. At the same time there is concern about sufficient learning:

*"This is a good school, but I often wonder if I learn enough here; this is something I am insecure about. What is good is that one doesn't feel left on the outside. There are no racists and such. Everybody who lives here is a foreigner."*

Girl, year 9, Örtagårdsskolan

One student is very proud of his school and likes the way the school shows the world that it is proud of its students. He is very positive towards the school's tradition of handing out awards in the hall to students who have done well:

*"This school is good for us boys because we boys like to compete. If I am challenged, I'm in. And if you get the best grades, then you'll receive an award or a distinction. And even if you don't win, you're still a winner, because you have done your best. It is important to have a challenge."*

Boy, year 9, Hjälliboskolan

### Working environment in the schools

One area that needed to be improved, namely the working environment in the class-room, was pinpointed in the interviews with the students. The students are irritated by noisy and unruly boys, there are not many of them but they disrupt the peace and quiet for their class mates. It is also difficult to concentrate on work because of loud boys, but they point out that girls too can be disruptive. It is evident in the interview material that the pupils think that their school is fun, precisely because things do happen, but on the other hand quarrels and a loud noise level is considered a problem.

*"The lessons can be quite disruptive here, the students want to try to be cool, and it is usually mostly boys who are unruly. The teachers shout at them and throw them out, but sometimes they tire and leave them be and then it turns into disruption. They keep doing this to get status, yes; it's the ones with the highest status who are the most disruptive. There are those who laugh and urge them on, I've done it myself, but when one stops to think this is stupid because we loose so much time on just drivel."*

Girl, year 9, Örtagårdsskolan

### The importance of teachers

The intercultural and pedagogic competence is excellent in our schools. But due to the multicultural mix in the studied schools, management and teachers alike work in an extraordinary setting. They have been forced to consider and develop their pedagogic work. The increased variety of social and cultural values within the class room, together with insufficient command of Swedish displayed by many, demand specific efforts from teachers, so that students develop knowledge suited to their individual prospects. The working situation in the class-room often leads management and teachers to a shared pedagogic view; it could be specific teaching methods or value base work. Hjälliboskolan is a good example of this.

Based on our interviews we have found the following: the students in the visited schools are very satisfied with most of the teachers. They describe the best teacher like this: *"Moderately strict and somebody who cares", knows his/her subject and explains so that everybody understands", "is both strict and kind at the same time"*.

*"The teachers here really are a bonus; they are very helpful and want you to succeed. But the teachers are also a drawback I think. Because there are some teachers who suit you and others who don't. A teacher should be both amusing and serious, not serious and boring. If a teacher is amusing and good, then I really long for classes and want to learn."*

Boy, year 8, Hjälliboskolan

### The teacher perspective

The teachers we met during our visits to the schools painted a common picture; they loved their work and they have consciously chosen to work in these schools, because it is precisely in their school that they feel they can make a difference. At the same time many of them testified to tough and very demanding work. This is how one teacher describes the working situation at Hjälliboskolan where he has worked for 25 years:

*"The big challenge is how to cope. I'm happy but it's tough. When things go well stimulus is great. The constant challenge is how to motivate the students. That is the base line! If you love your subject you want to share the pleasure; we have to keep reminding us of the pleasurable. Basically the students have to feel sure that I like them. When this happens then you can yell at them lovingly and it hits home, if it doesn't happen then you cannot work."*

Teacher, Hjälliboskolan

A teacher at Husbyskolan describes why he has chosen to work precisely there and how he gets upset when others, who do not have any real knowledge of Husby, tend to turn problems in the area into ethnical problems:

*"I have chosen to work here at Husbyskolan because this is where I can make a difference as a teacher; that is the best with being a teacher here. The worst thing for the students is when a teacher who works in a school like Husbyskolan does not make an effort! Lower class people live here, many are poor; the problem is not whether one comes from Iran or Somalia. Many of our students come from homes where there is not one book, and no tradition of studying."*

Teacher, Husbyskolan

This is what a civil servant with many years' working experience in Kista says:

*"The best multicultural teacher competence is found in the suburbs of the large cities. We need to develop our organisation so that these teachers can spread their knowledge and experience to others; they have been forced to reflect over things"*

Civil servant, Schools and Education Division, City of Stockholm

### Student success

A student's success cannot always be measured in school report marks and individual progress does not show in statistics. This is a cause of frustration for the interviewed teachers. They requested a measuring tool by which progress would be evident for students and parents, something that could change the bad reputation of the school:

*"We can see what a tremendous journey the children make and how they reach many goals on the way, but this cannot be measured in report marks, ...no, unfortunately we haven't found a fair way to measure this. Despite extensive support, and areas where one can see a great positive development with many students, it is unlikely that all the students will reach the set targets. But the effort will nevertheless mean that the students will have a far stronger foundation for further studies and it would be fantastic if we had a measuring tool for showing the progress to students and parents."*

Teacher, Hjälliboskolan

### Qualifications

The student groups in Örtagårdsskolan, Husbyskolan, Hjälliboskolan and Arabyskolan show a wide range of linguistic and knowledge based qualifications. A recurrent theme in discussions within the teacher groups is whether teaching is on the right level. There are worries that there always is a risk of a "collective lowest common denominator", and that all students do not receive sufficient challenges in their learning process:

*"Some teachers put the bar too low and others too high... I feel that they don't care when they demand too little. I have friends in other schools and when they tell me what they know I can get a little worried and wonder why they don't demand more from us."*

Girl, year 9, Örtagårdsskolan

Some of the interviewed teachers thought that it could be useful for them to work in another school for a few weeks to get a comparable perspective. But they were also unanimous in thinking that it would not be good for their students to have strange teachers from other schools coming to their school. The teachers felt that many students become anxious when change takes place.

## School – working life

The school affects how its students place themselves in the labour market in a fundamental way (the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 2005a). It is the students' achievements in primary school (7–16) which decides their choice of secondary school (16–19) and their achievements in the secondary school has a great, in many cases decisive, importance for the route to further education and work. It is very important for the process of establishing themselves that young people know what choices they have. Each person's social network, such as family, relatives and friends, can help the student to, already during the secondary school years, get into contact with the labour market, for example through tip-offs about jobs, help with job hunting and holiday jobs.

We know that a young person's establishing process is positively affected if he/she has a chance to early contact with the labour market (see for example SOU 2006:102, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 2005a). This is why it is especially important that there are support efforts giving the young help in their first contacts with the labour market, not least in socially deprived areas.

The young people we met painted a mixed picture of their experiences of working life. There are young people who have lived in Sweden a very short time and have had the time to try many different jobs, and there are young people who have never had any practice or a summer job. Some have access to a large social network with relatives and friends around Sweden, but also around the world. Others have no network that could ease their way into the labour market.

The students we have met are not part of ethnic Swedish life because of the population composition in their housing area and the composition of students in their schools. It is especially important that students with a foreign background have access to Swedish networks. Work experience, *prao*<sup>2</sup>, is a good opportunity for many to gain new experiences and contacts. Work experience is the first contact with working life for most students. The students have described this experience in very positive terms and do not wish to reduce their work experience time.

The interviewed students were unanimous in thinking that two weeks work experience in year 8 is not enough and in Husbyskolan one of the student council's most important tasks was to secure the idea of two more weeks of work experience in year 9.

All our schools encouraged the students to arrange their work experience themselves, but if this was not possible the school would help. When we asked the students why work experience was so good, three main explanations emerged. It was fun and exiting to get away from school and the area and be active in a completely new context. Many mentioned how useful it was to get new contacts and for some this led to a continuation, they were given a weekend- and holiday job at their work experience place.

## Concluding thoughts

The headmaster at Angereds gymnasium (in Göteborg) summarised the work of the compulsory and secondary schools we visited in an apt way:

*"We stretch ourselves to the utmost and try to find flexible solutions. There is so much heart and will among the personnel, we do a fantastic job, but we have to think new all the time".*

Headmaster, Angereds gymnasium

As mentioned before, school management and teachers have been forced to think again and to adopt innovative pedagogic solutions because the student composition in the schools we visited is so heterogeneous. Despite the fantastic work being done daily in the schools much improvement is left to be done. An equal education for all is still an unrealized goal in Sweden. Students have different individual, social and contextual qualifications for reaching their learning targets and it is, as we have shown, a complex map of factors that affect their motivation and their school results.

The existing differences between student performances in schools today have a socio-geographic dimension. In other words, the educational performances are affected by the composition of students in the school, by parental level of education of the majority in a school, and where the school is situated. Young people who grow up in socially deprived areas have a worse starting point than those who live in more prosperous areas.

Individual factors among students, for example ability to study and motivation, can to an extent, explain differences in learning performance, choice of courses and school. We have shown that the following factors, in a decisive way, affect both study results and decisions about school and education: how long the student has been in Sweden, the pedagogic work in the school, the parents' level of education and position in the labour market, country of birth and the area where the family lives. Many young people often experience a combination of effects of class, ethnicity, gender and housing segregation.

Good teachers can compensate for possible negative factors in student performance, and a good teacher is significantly important for schools in socially deprived areas. One of the factors that characterise a successful school, according to research about effective schools, is that the teachers have high and positive expectations of their students. Moves that also have shown to lead to success in schools are a shared pedagogic view, clear rules, help with home work and functioning contacts with the parents.

Other activities that also, according to our research, give positive results, are having foreign-born persons with a good knowledge of the area who voluntary help in the school, or go-betweeners who ease contacts with the parents. Teachers, who work in schools to which students from deprived suburbs apply, need to be trained, both in methods of language development and inter-cultural competence. In this case, co-operation between teachers who work in schools with similar competences and experiences as those we have visited is of great significance.

# The labour market in socially deprived housing areas

How does growing up in socially deprived suburban areas affect the prospects for young people trying to establish themselves in the labour market? A large-scale study from USA that have followed young people up to 30 years of age who have grown up in socially deprived areas, show that the predominant explanations for success in the labour market is connected to socio-economical circumstances linked to the family one has grown up in, rather than to experiences linked to the housing area (Oreopoulos 2003).

Earlier research from Sweden have also shown that the probability of having a job is equally great among those born abroad and living in socially deprived housing areas, as among foreign born living in other kinds of areas. The big difference in opportunities in the labour market seems thus to be between those born in Sweden and those born abroad rather than between different types of housing areas (Hedberg 2008).

The effect of housing segregation on an individual's earnings development is generally lower than its effect on educational career. The most important factors explaining differences in educational career between children of a Swedish background and those of an immigrant background are found in the educational, cultural and economic resources within the family. Growing up in different families brings various prerequisites that manifest themselves in the child's successes within the educational system. The effect the family has on the child's labour market career acts, according to this research, primarily in an indirect way through school performance (Szulkin 2008). Another finding is that the effects of the housing area's ethnic mix on success in the labour market, are primarily concentrated to the second generation of immigrants, that is, to the children of immigrants. One interpretation is that the young who have themselves immigrated to Sweden do not feel the effects of the housing area in the same way because their labour market status is already so low that immunity develops as a kind of bottom effect (Szulkin 2008).

A probable explanation for the differences in earnings between the first and second generation immigrants and people with a Swedish background, not explained by differences in individual resources, is that the groups are treated differently in the labour market. Immigrating to a new country can mean many difficulties for children and the young. Earlier research suggests that these difficulties are not limited to the period immediately after immigration. New obstacles seem to develop after the completed education, when this education is to be converted into a stable position in the

labour market. These obstacles are especially apparent when entering the labour market. When individuals have managed to establish themselves in the labour market ethnic origin is of lesser importance for the development of income (Szulkin 2008).

Other research about the effects the residential area has on the way young people establish themselves in the labour market has shown that the housing environment seems to have some, if a somewhat limited, influence on the work of the young (Andersson 2001, Sundlöf 2008). One study shows that the chances of work are slightly lower for the young who have lived many years in one of the million programme areas (Andersson 2001).

A series of studies by Andersson and Musterd support the notion that the proportion of unemployed in an area does affect the work career of both older and younger people (Musterd & Andersson 2005, Musterd & Andersson 2006). The probability of someone being able to return to work after a period of unemployment is considerably lower if there are many unemployed in the area of residence (Hedström 2003, Socialstyrelsens 2006).

## The labour market in numbers

Young people enter the labour market later in life. The age where 75 per cent of a year group is in work, is 26 years in Sweden today. It is statistically more difficult to describe how the young connect to the labour market than how other agegroups do it. This is because many youngsters who have not yet established themselves in working life move back and forth between different activities such as employment, studies and unemployment. In *Fokus 08* we use a number of different ways to describe inclusion and exclusion of the young in the labour market. The results show that young people living in socially deprived housing areas have a considerably more difficult situation in the labour market than other young people in Sweden.

### Employment rate

Statistics of employment rates in socially deprived neighbourhoods is presented in *Fokus 08*. The employment rate is the ratio between people of a certain age in employment, according to official income statistics, and the total population. When calculating the employment rate we have excluded people registered as students.

As figure 5 shows, employment rate among the young in socially deprived neighbourhoods is considerably lower than among the young in other parts of the

municipalities. The difference is 20–30 percentage units. The employment rate is higher among the older (26–64) than among the younger (20–25) in both the socially deprived neighbourhoods and the surrounding municipalities. Figure 5 also shows that young women have a lower level of employment than young men. This is the case both in the studied areas and the municipalities as a whole. The differences between sexes is however, larger there than in the surrounding municipalities. The results also show that young people whose parents are on a low income have higher unemployment levels. The employment rate also differs between the young depending on where they were born. Young people born in Africa and Western Asia have the lowest employment rates.

### Young entrepreneurs

The proportion of everyone in Sweden having a job who run their own businesses was 9 per cent in 2006. Among the young 20–25 the proportion was even smaller, about 2 per cent in the whole of Sweden. The share of young entrepreneurs is even smaller in socially disadvantaged suburban areas. One exception however, is Rosengård, where the proportion of young entrepreneurs is slightly higher than in the country at large.

### Distance to work

In *Fokus 08* there is also an analysis of how far from their homes the young between 20–25 travel to get to work. The distance between home and work for the young in socially deprived suburban areas is compared to that of the young in other housing areas at the same distance from the city centres. The results show that, in the studied areas, a very small number of the young work inside or very close to their own residential

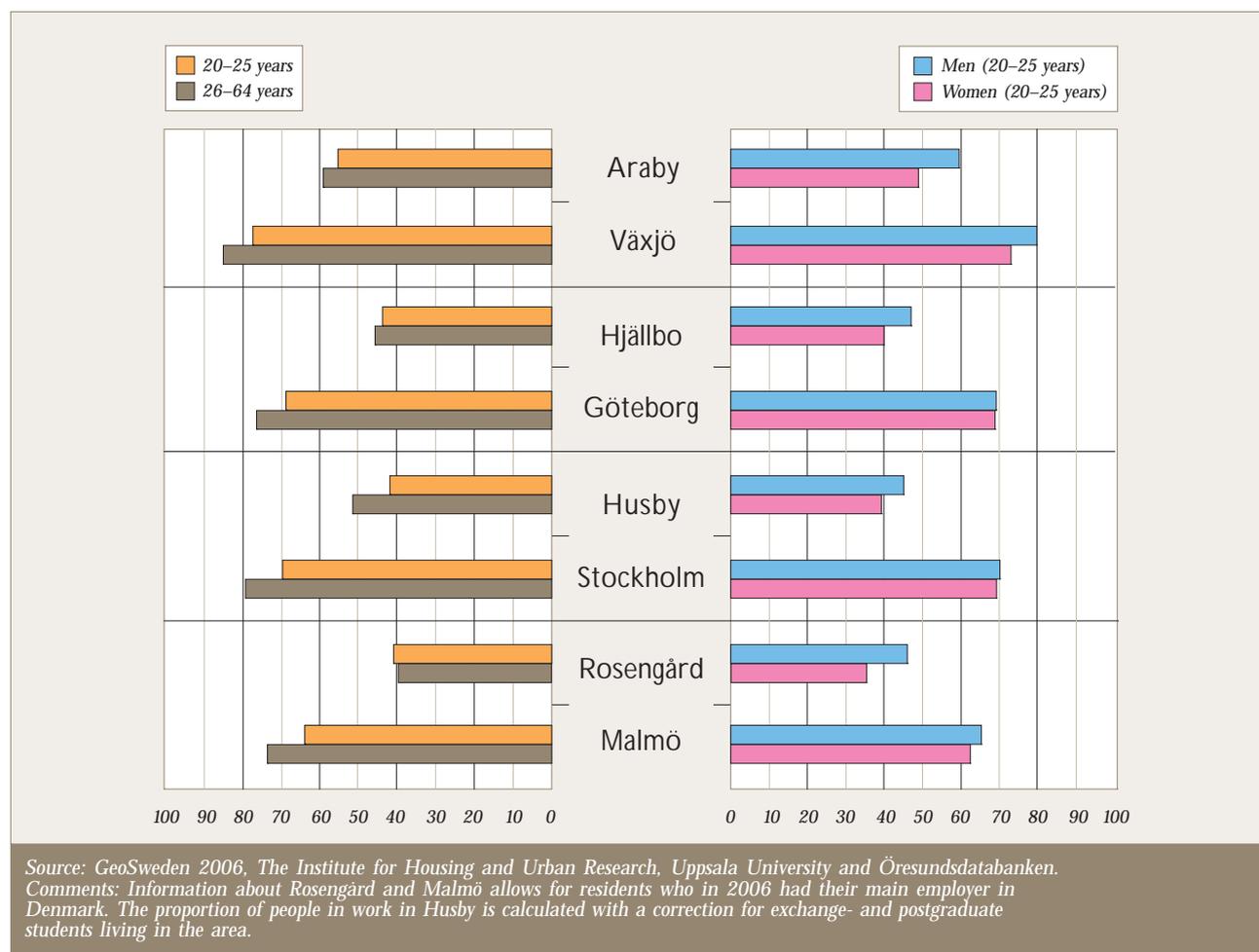


Figure 5. Employment rate, (exclusive of students) among residents of 20–25 and 26–64 years of age, and among men respectively women, in the four studied areas and in respective municipality, 2006. Per cent.

district. Youngsters from the socially deprived suburban areas who are employed do not have shorter distances to work than those living in other kind of housing areas. The analysis also shows that older people (26–64) work closer to home to an increasing extent than do the young (20–25).

### Experience of open unemployment

*Fokus 08* displays statistics of how large a share of the population in Sweden has been officially registered unemployed at any time during 2006. With unemployed we here mean somebody who lacks occupation, is registered as jobseeker at the employment office and willing to immediately accept a job if one is offered. The rate of young people (20–25) with experience of unemployment is 27 per cent in the whole of Sweden. Experience of unemployment among the young is however; much more widespread in the four socially deprived suburban areas studied in *Fokus 08*. The largest share of those who have experienced unemployment was found in Hjällbo and Araby where 40 per cent of the young had been unemployed sometime during 2006. In Rosengård the proportion was 36 per cent and in Husby 25 per cent.

Youth unemployment in Sweden is normally double of that of the older population. The results in *Fokus 08* show that the differences in experiences of unemployment between the young and the older are greater in the socially deprived areas than in the surrounding municipalities. We also see that young people whose parents have a higher income have less

experience of unemployment than youngsters whose parents have lower incomes.

### Young people who neither work nor study

At the beginning of the 2000's it was noticed that many young people in Sweden had fallen outside of the system designed to help the young establish themselves in society. Many young persons were neither in education nor in the labour market. In *Fokus 08* statistics describing the proportion of young people who neither work nor study is presented. The criteria for inclusion in this group is that one should not have had a combined income from work, sickness benefit or parental benefit during 2006 exceeding a basic amount of (4 390 Euro in year 2006 currency). Also, one should not have done national service or studied during the year.

The results in *Fokus 08* show that the proportion of youngsters (20–25) who neither work nor study is alarmingly large. Among all youngsters in Sweden the proportion was 14 per cent in 2006. The levels are much higher in the socially deprived suburban areas. As figure 7 shows, the proportion in Husby is 38 per cent, in Hjällbo and Rosengård around 35 per cent and in Araby 27 per cent. In social deprived urban areas in Sweden just over 2 per centage units more men than women are excluded from both the education system and the labour market.

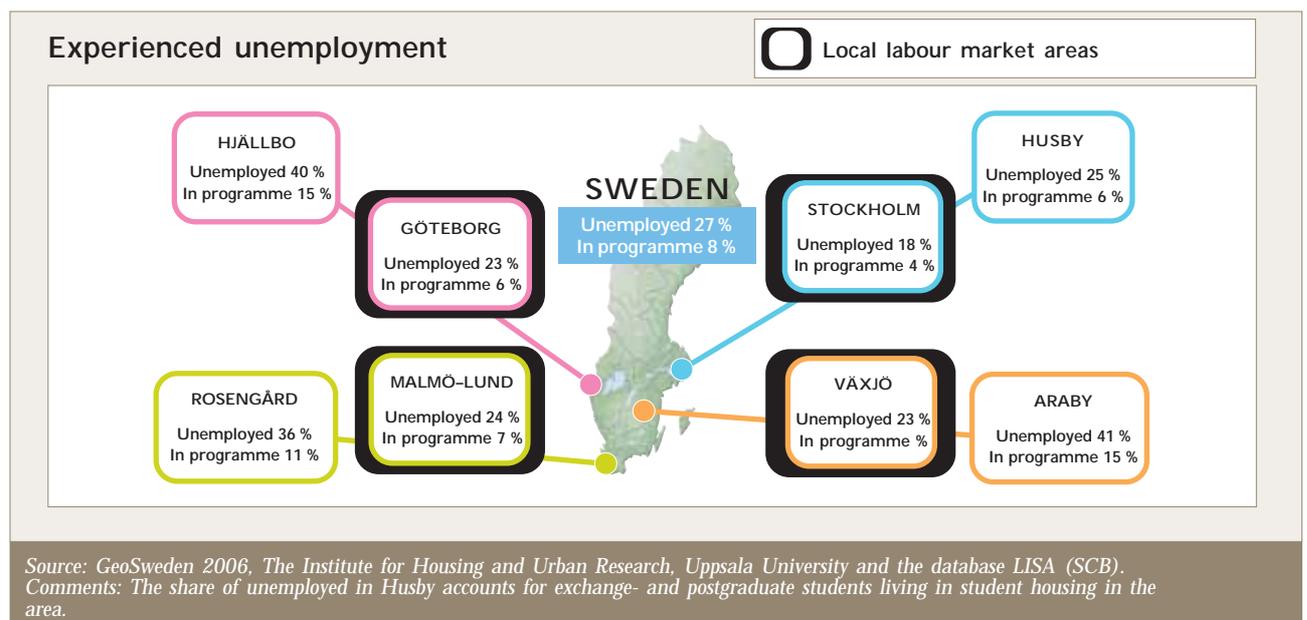


Figure 6. Proportion of inhabitants, 20–25, who have experienced unemployment and/or been, occupied in labour market programmes during the year, in the whole country, in local labour market areas and in the four studied areas, 2006. Per cent.

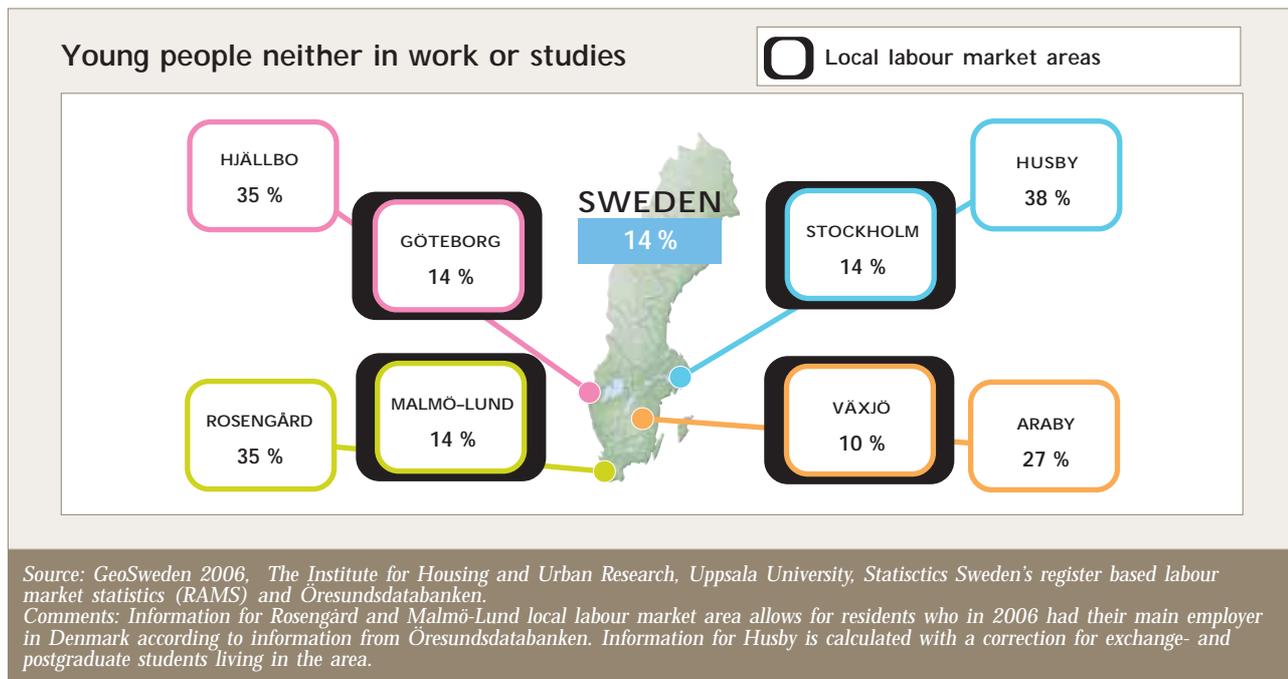


Figure 7. Proportion of 20–25 year olds who in 2006 neither worked nor studied. The whole country, local labour market areas and four studied areas. Per cent.

## Youth employment measures

Since the 1990's, large groups of people have been excluded from the labour market and large groups have not received support from Social Insurance. Social Insurance is for people registered at the Public Employment Service, which is a governmental authority. Many have received support from different kinds of economic aid instead. Economic aid is channelled through the self-governing municipalities by their social services. Both state and municipalities have a responsibility for people who for various reasons do not establish themselves in the labour market and for implementing various kinds of youth measures.

Unemployment is common in the areas we studied, and a very large proportion of the young living in these areas has experienced exclusion from both studies and labour market. Many lack previous experience of work, and if they do have it, then it is often short term. A large number of young people thus do not qualify for unemployment benefit and receive social assistance instead. The young unemployed, who receive social assistance in the municipalities, are obliged to take part in employment measures for youth. These measures are usually tied to a requirement that says that the person seeking income support has to be registered with the public employment office and be available for the labour market. This requirement is however, not absolute, as many of those on income support are not ready for employment.

It follows that the social services then have a responsibility that borders on the labour market policy. At the same time the Public Employment Service has been given a greater responsibility for establishing deprived youngsters in the labour market. Because the public authorities, The Public Employment Service and Social Insurance, work with similar problems as the municipalities, there is reason to collect the activities under a common name, youth employment measures.

## Measures and models

Municipal activities aiming at equipping young people for the labour market have a few attributes in common. These are investing in individual solutions, matching and co-operation. In earlier studies, by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs and others, these were cited as success factors for local activities aimed at breaking the cycle of deprivation by the young in the labour market (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2005a, SOU 2003:92). But there are also a range of differences between the activities, for example who they are aimed at, how they are financed and whether they are run as projects or are permanent.

There are a range of official players who work with helping young people establish themselves in the labour market. *Fokus 05* categorised different incentives and labour market programmes (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2005b). The categorising illustrated how these differing

incentives either occurred within labour market policy, education- and social policy or culture- and recreation policy. It showed that there might be several active operators within the labour market area, with different political causes (figure 8).

Figure 8 illustrates that labour market policy related activities can emanate from different parts of municipal administration, and that many public authorities have obligations within the area, and that clearly defined areas of responsibility and a developed co-operation is essential.

The relevant actors in this area are found both within municipal administration and public authorities. This makes co-operation imperative. There are many reasons for this. One is that available resources have to be utilised as effectively as possible and duplication of work avoided. Another is that the individual in need of support should be spared having to deal with several different public actors. When many actors are involved the risk is great that the individual is exposed to conflicting messages and different methods. Co-operation between authorities can either be about the all-embracing, as in organisation and area of responsibility, or work with individuals. In co-operation it is essential that the individual does not risk falling between two chairs.

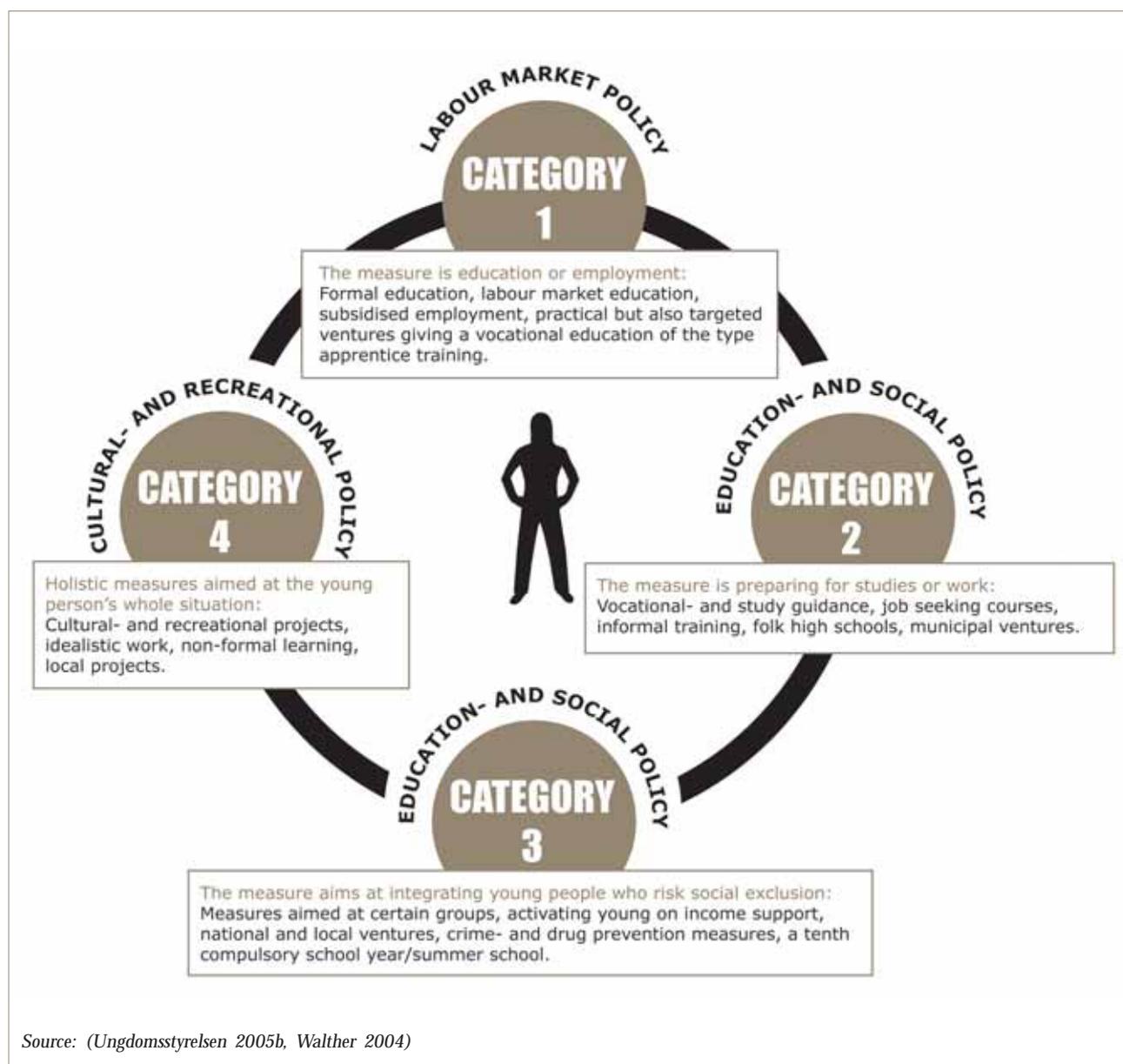


Figure 8. Public and municipal policy aimed at helping the young establish themselves in the labour market.

## Dividing roles between state and municipalities

Who is responsible for the young? Basically the young are responsible for their own lives, especially when of lawful age. Before this, it is the parents who are responsible and with secondary school students this parental responsibility continues until they have left school or turned 21 years of age. But state and municipality also have a responsibility. How far this obligation stretches and what support the authorities should offer is however, not clearly defined.

## The role of the Public Employment Service

The overall target for The Public Employment Service is to act to improve the way the labour market works. This happens by matching the job seeker with those looking for labour. The employment office is obliged to act to get more people into work long term and to prioritise those who are well outside of the labour market. This means that they work with the young who are excluded from the labour market for example; formally this responsibility covers the young from 16 years up.

When Young Persons Job Guarantee was introduced in 2007, the Employment Service (state) was given the chief responsibility for all young people from 16 years of age and up in labour market related issues. In reality however, the municipalities are responsible for a huge number of these young people and carry the main responsibility for a large part of the activities they are offered. The reason for this is that a large proportion of the job seeking youngsters depends on income support. This again means that the municipalities have an important role in establishing a large group of young people in the labour market.

## The role of the municipalities

There is a municipal follow-up obligation formulated in the Education Act, which means that municipalities have to stay informed about and offer suitable individual measures for those under 20 who have not finished secondary school and neither work nor study. Moreover, there is a responsibility for all citizens, formulated in the Social Services Act. The Act says that municipalities have to design their activities to break the cycle of benefit dependency. The Education Act says that municipalities are obliged to stay informed about the occupation of young people under 20 years of age (Andersson 2000).

This obligation also means that municipalities have a responsibility to follow up and inform young people, who neither study nor work, about possibilities for work. The offered occupation is in reality either studies at the individual programme in secondary school, or different kinds of labour market related projects, often under municipal management. If the individual does not attend education, there is often a striving to help him/her to establish him/herself in the labour market. The work municipalities do with young people within the frame of this follow-up obligation is not linked to the right to receive income support and thus it is entirely voluntary to attend these activities.

## The role of the Social Insurance Office

The governmental authority the Social Insurance Office is responsible for large parts of the public social security system. This can include insurance for sick people with reduced ability to work for example. The Social Insurance Office decides on benefit rights, reimburses and co-ordinates resources to help people on sick leave to return to work quickly. With this follows that the authority is responsible for benefits to some of the groups excluded from the labour market.

It is usually necessary to have worked a certain time and to have had a certain income level, a so called sickness allowance based income, to get access to social insurance handled by the Social Insurance Office. Those who come directly from education or who have never had a job do not have a sickness allowance based income and are thus not included in the responsibilities of the authority.

## Models for breaking the cycle of benefit dependency

Our study, as many other earlier studies, shows that it is important that there is a clear entrance and a clear model for those who seek help to establish themselves in society. This demands co-ordination of municipality activities and co-operation with authorities on a governmental level. The activities we studied all have ambitions towards creating an obvious access to municipal resources, but the ways the activities are organised differ, and co-operation with public authorities is more or less developed.

In Malmö work to break the cycle of alienation among the young is done via the municipal Employment and Integration Centre, AIC, which is an organisation form and an activity model, a joint entrance to the municipality's and the state's resources for income support receivers in certain districts. These Work- and Integration Centres have a formalised co-operation

with the employment office and the Social Insurance Office. Unemployed youngsters who need support from many different directions thus get all the help simultaneously from one place in some of Malmö's districts.

Jobbtorget (the Job market) in Husby in Stockholm is for those who receive income support due to unemployment. Work with income support takers was previously shaped in different ways in Stockholm's various districts. These days there is a common organisation covering the whole city. This uniform organisation aims to facilitate experience exchange within the municipality, and give the person on benefit one single place to go to.

Trappa upp (Up the stairs) in Hjällbo in Göteborg is not a concept for the whole of Göteborg, and different districts have their own solutions. The target group for Trappa upp is both individuals available for the labour market, and individuals in need of extensive rehabilitation, work training etc. Trappa upp is a uniform structure for work with income support receivers in the district of Lärjedalen. It is not a physical place offering different activities, but a concept, to help assessing the needs of each respective individual, and to place this person into a suitable activity.

Various activities, with similar contents as in the other cities, were studied in Växjö, among others the district based project "Resource Araby" and the "Basement activity". The municipal activities we looked at were being discussed among the city leaders, because labour market related work was not necessarily seen as a statutory activity for the municipality, but instead something that belonged under the public employment office. This is an example of how implementation of ruling legislation in the area can be executed differently depending on locality.

Universal for the studied municipal models for breaking benefit dependency and promoting entry into labour market, is that they assume unemployment and benefit dependency depend on individual factors and that individual orientated measures are needed to solve the problem with entry into the labour market. At the same time it is worth underlining that these individual problems are largely caused by structural reasons.

There are primarily two different conditions that affect the number of individuals in the studied areas who receive some sort of economic aid. Firstly, the number of dependents on benefit varies with society's state of the market. Secondly, the number of individuals depending on economic support is affected by the number of newly arrived in the area who receives workplace induction compensation. This means that the activities we studied often, but not always, work in similar ways, with investments in individual solutions, matching and co-operation. These are the features

highlighted also in other reports by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, as successful local activities to break young people's exclusion in the labour market. The differences between the activities can simultaneously depend on which groups they target, the individual's needs, how the activities are financed and if they are run in project form or if they are permanent activities.

Often occurring activities are individualising, tip-offs about available jobs and active job hunting. As similarities often are more common than differences between the studied activities, we wish to present a model that can work as a base for bringing out these similarities and differences between the various activities.

In *Fokus 08* we have, in figure 9, tried to illustrate differences in prerequisites for the activities, differences in ways of working, steering legislation and views on the individual. The figure shows a compilation of these differences. The aim is to refine two different views, and not to describe actual activities.

The model in Figure 9 illustrates the fact that prerequisites such as legislation, voluntariness and action targets differ between various ways of working with the young unemployed. The model also shows an existing conflict between differing views on how the activities should be run. According to the youthpolicy the young should be seen as a resource, which should be the basis for all activities aimed for and with youth.

With this model we want to show different options in the work with supporting the young to establish themselves in the labour market. We think that these choices should be guided by the needs of the individual. To help the young establish themselves in the labour market is a fundamental matter if alienation is to be eliminated. The road leading to the labour market is effortless for some, but for others this road is crooked and full of problems. It might be individual problems or it could be problems related to public institutions and their way of working. Often it is a question of finding effective ways for co-operation between the different institutions. For the individual it is about navigating right in the public structures. There is a need for one entrance leading to different kinds of activities, and there is a need for exits leading to the labour market.

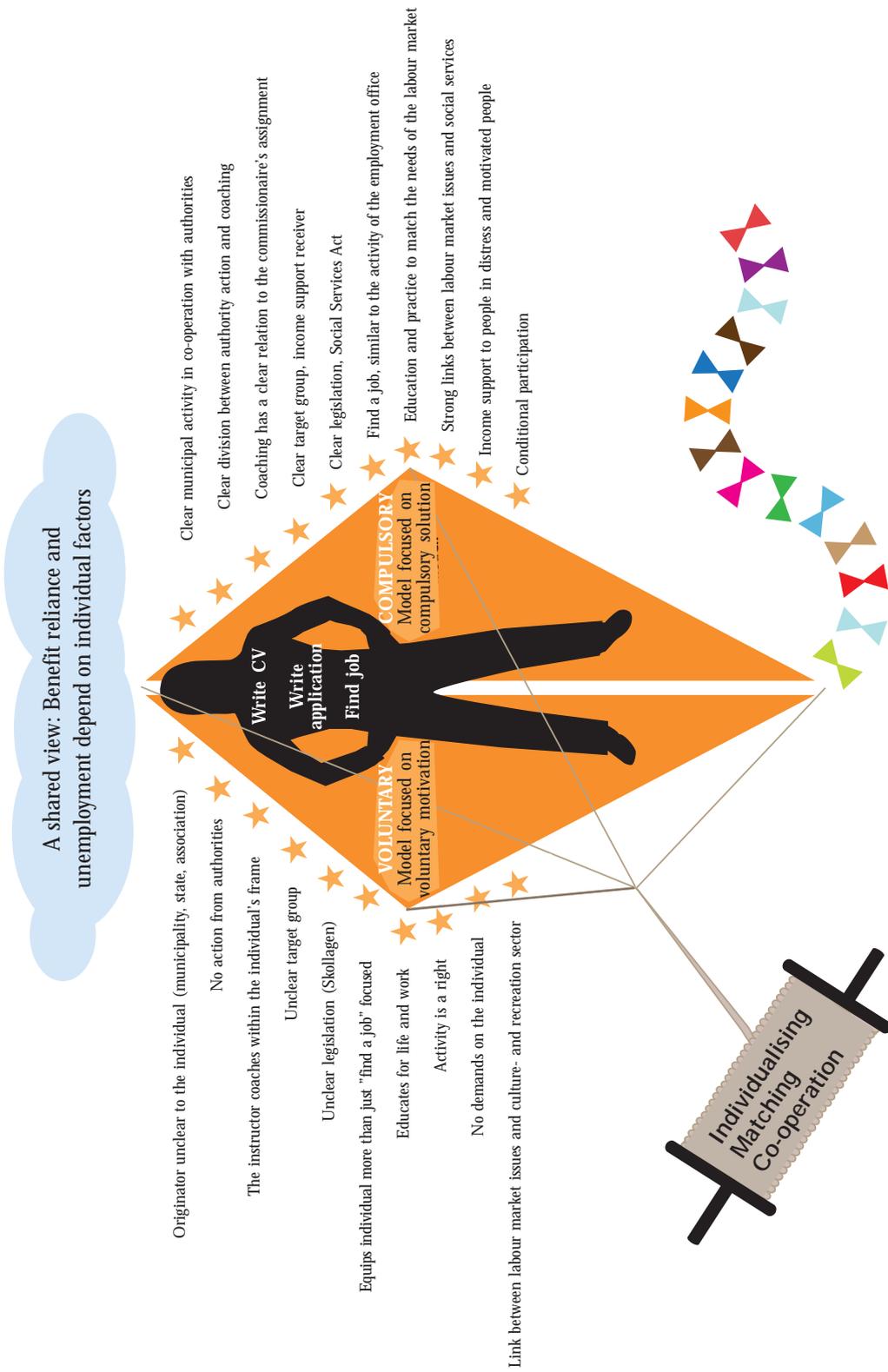


Figure 9. Comparison between different ways of helping the young establish themselves in the labour market.

# Summary

Our conclusions, when looking at the educational situation of the young, are as follows:

1. There are 112 primary schools (with grades 6-9) in Sweden where the proportion of students with a foreign background is over 50 per cent. The student composition in these schools is often very heterogeneous and the students' knowledge of Swedish varies.
2. Because of the multicultural mix, teachers in these schools have had to ponder over and develop their pedagogic work.
3. The work situation in the class-room has led management and teachers in these schools, to feel that they have a stronger need than other schools for a pedagogic common view.
4. Young people growing up in socially deprived areas have an inferior starting point, compared with students living in more affluent areas. The students' educational performances are affected by the mix of students in the school, by the parents' level of education and in what area the school is situated.
5. Groups of foreign born students are very heterogeneous, and students have arrived from countries with both very diverse educational- and cultural structures.
6. A good teacher is extraordinary important in socially deprived areas. One criterion, according to research, of successful schools is competent teachers with high and positive hopes on their students.
7. Students in the studied areas attend a primary school close to home slightly more often than do those in other types of housing areas. This is a clear pattern.
8. Teachers and students in the studied areas experience insecurity about the level of education in the schools. The students feel that many teachers keep the teaching on a lower level, and have lesser demands and expectations on student performances, compared with how they interpret what they see in schools in other areas.
9. Students in the socially deprived areas say in interviews that they are bothered by rowdy and noisy boys, not many, but they ruin the peace and quiet for their class mates.
10. Our interviewed headmasters and teachers highlighted a constant area for development: how to create good relations with the parents and engage them in the school-work and in the student's homework. Another developmental effort mentioned by the headmasters and the teachers is how to better define the learning targets both for parents and students.
11. The success of the students cannot always be measured in pass grades, and this is a cause of frustration for teachers and headmasters. The work teachers and schools do, and the students' individual progress do not show in the statistics. They call for a tool that measures and illustrates the progress for students and parents.
12. The secondary schools we visited have produced a mentor- or a sponsor programme that makes it possible for the young to get work experience, which also gives students access to a mentor who can widen the social network for them.
13. Compulsory school and secondary school students feel that their future is bright. Many would like to start a family and remain in their area, but think they will move, mainly because they do not want their children to have to defend the bad reputation of their housing district.

The collected evaluation of the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is that more can be done to help all students in deprived housing areas to finish primary school with qualifications for the national programmes in secondary school. Also, the negative image of schools in distressed neighbourhoods is not fair, and this further impedes the work of the schools. Suggestions for remedies have been presented to the government.

Our conclusions, when looking at occupation of the young, entrepreneurship and what distinguishes the local labour market, are as follows:

1. The employment rate for young people in the distressed neighbourhoods is 20-30 per cent units lower than in other parts of the municipalities.
2. Young women are in work to a lesser extent than young men. This is true for both the surveyed areas and the municipalities as a whole.
3. The surveyed areas show differences between the young depending on where they were born. Occupation levels are lowest among young people born in Africa and those born in Western Asia.
4. The proportion of young people aged 20-25 who run their own businesses is about 2 per cent for the whole country. The proportion of young entrepreneurs is even lower in the studied area. One exception is Rosengård where the proportion of young entrepreneurs is 3,7 per cent.
5. A very small proportion of the young in the studied areas work close or very close to home. The older work closer to home to a greater extent than do the younger ones. Employed young people in socially deprived areas have as far to travel to work as young people in other kind of housing areas.
6. The proportion of young people in Sweden who have at some time during 2006 been openly unemployed is 27 per cent. Experience of unemployment is much more widespread among the young in the surveyed areas. The largest proportion was found in Hjällbo and Araby where 40 per cent of the young people had been unemployed some time during 2006.
7. There is a clear link between the parents' income and the young person's experience of unemployment. The likelihood of having been unemployed diminished with rising parental income. This is true for the three cities, not for Växjö.

8. *Fokus 08* has calculated the proportion of young people who neither study nor work. According to this estimate, 14 per cent of the young of 20-25 years of age in the whole of Sweden are excluded from both the labour market and education.

9. The ratio of young people excluded from the labour market and education is 38 per cent in Husby, 24 per centage units greater than in the Stockholm local labour market area. The ratio is around 35 per cent in Hjällbo and Rosengård, 21 per centage units greater than in respective local labour markets. In Araby the ratio is 27 per cent, 17 per centage units greater than in Växjö local labour market area.

Our conclusions, when looking at work to help the young establish themselves in the labour market, are as follows:

1 The employment office has, due to the introduction of the young persons job guarantee and the abolition of the municipal labour market programmes, been given a greater responsibility for establishment of alienated youngsters in the labour market. This has further accentuated the need for co-operation between municipal and public authorities.

2 *Fokus 08* shows again that it is important to have a clear entrance and a clear model for the person who asks for help in the establishment process to the labour market. Young people with an urgent need for help should not have to wander between different authorities and risk finding that measures to alleviate the need have not been co-ordinated.

3 The young persons job guarantee has changed co-operation structures between the employment office and the municipality. This has primarily affected the work surrounding work experience placements, where the job guarantee has meant that efforts to reinforce the link between the young and the labour market through work practice have been restricted. This is very negative, because many young people ask for practice above all.

The collected evaluation of the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is that young people in distressed neighbourhoods do not receive the most effective support. More can be done to help them get work faster than today. Co-operation between the employment office and other actors must emanate from the needs of the young to a greater extent. The government has received suggestions for remedies in these areas.

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# Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In appendix 1 you can read more about the studied areas.

<sup>2</sup> Prao i s a short period of vocationally oriented activities during the school year.

## Appendix 1

# The Studied Areas



### Araby

Araby housing district is situated in Växjö, a medium-sized Swedish town with 56 000 inhabitants. The area was developed and largely built during the early years of the so called miljonprogrammet (the million programme, a housing programme which set out to build one million houses/flats in 1963-1971). Situated outside the city centre then, but quite centrally positioned today, as newer buildings have been added round the district. The distance from Araby to Växjö centre is about two kilometres. Araby contains both blocks of flats of three-four stories, and a densely built one family residential area. In 1987 two free-standing tower blocks complemented the million programme district. This district is the most densely built part of Växjö, with 5 300 residents of whom 22 per cent are of the ages 13-25. 90 per cent of Araby's residents live in rental flats and 10 per cent in private houses. The largest park in Växjö, Arabyparken, lies in the middle of this area. There are playgrounds, basket ball fields, wooded areas, tennis courts and a football pitch in the park. The municipality has decided to build an all-activity house here, a sports hall combined with a cultural arena. The area also has a shopping centre, grocery shops and some other shops and services.



### Hjällbo

Hjällbo housing estate is situated in Sweden's second largest city Göteborg with 510 000 inhabitants. Hjällbo lies 7-8 kilometres northeast of the city centre. One of three tramlines, crossing the area and terminating in Angered, will take you from Göteborg centre to Hjällbo in about 12 minutes. Hjällbo has 7 000 residents of whom 23 per cent are between 13-25 years old. Hjällbo is bounded by Göta älv (the river) and large green spaces; Lärjeån (a smaller river) meanders through the estate. Hjällbo was built during the 1960's and 1970's and contains blocks of flats, mainly of 3-4 stories with plenty of empty spaces and park like areas between the houses. 95 per cent of the residents live in rental flats and 5 per cent in individual houses. There are two primary and secondary schools, one senior level secondary school and ten different nurseries. The centre has shops, a market-hall, market stalls and club houses etc.



## Husby

Husby housing estate lies in Stockholm, Sweden's capital, with 1 250 000 inhabitants. The distance from central Stockholm to Husby is 10-12 kilometres and to get there takes 19 minutes on the tube from Stockholm central station. Husby has 12 700 residents of whom 22 per cent are of the ages 13-25. Husby was built close to the large green open space Järvafältet and was completed in the middle of the 1970's.

The housing stock in Husby is mainly five story houses at right angles. The central area is slightly less densely built and there are a few tower blocks. A footpath connecting Husby with two other housing estates built in the 1970's runs through the area. Most of Husby's service establishments, such as grocery shops, pharmacy, health centre and the child health clinic lie along this footpath. There is also an adventure pool, an ice rink, a library, some of Kista's municipal offices and a folk high-school. 87 per cent of residents live in rental flats and 13 per cent in tenant owner flats in Husby. Some of the flats have in recent years been converted into tenant owner flats.



## Rosengård

The housing estate Rosengård lies in Sweden's third largest city, Malmö, 258 000 inhabitants. Rosengård is within walking distance of the inner city and 4 kilometres from the centre. The most socially exposed part of Rosengård, the area surveyed in *Fokus 08*, has 17 000 residents.

The majority of the residents come from abroad and a total of about 50 different language groups are represented here. The bulk of the district's housing consists of blocks of flats erected during the 1960's and 1970's. 95 per cent of the residents live in rental flats and 5 per cent in tenant owner flats. There is a shopping centre in the middle of the area, with a hypermarket and an abundance of shops, a library, and something similar to a citizen's advice bureau for queries and issues relating to the municipality. There are club houses, football pitches, open air swimming pools and recreation centres in Rosengård.

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# THE SWEDISH NATIONAL BOARD FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS

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The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is a government authority. We work to ensure that young people have access to influence and welfare. We do this by producing and communicating knowledge on young people's living conditions. We also distribute funding to the civil society in the form of support for organisations, projects and international cooperation. All the support we distribute is given on behalf of the Swedish government.



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