

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANT EDUCATION

- Around 20% of students speak a language other than Swedish, and more than 100 languages spoken in the country.
- Already in primary education, immigrant students read less well than native students. The gap is pronounced particularly for students not born in Sweden.
- At age 15, students who are not born in Sweden perform well below their native peers in reading, mathematics and science; and a little over quarter of these students have not even reached the basic reading proficiency level, compared with only about 3% of native students.
- Immigrant students who are born in the country perform much better than their first-generation immigrant peers, lagging only slightly behind native students.
- Upper secondary education is the most challenging education level for first- and second-generation immigrant students.
- Socio-economic background and speaking a different language at home largely explain the performance gap between immigrants and native students.
- By international standards, Sweden has an inclusive, democratic education system and has undertaken universal and targeted measures to improve the situation of immigrant students.

POLICIES TO IMPROVE MIGRANT EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Provide training of all teachers – not only language teachers but subject and classroom teachers – to be more responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students.
- Provide leadership training for school leaders to implement a “whole-school approach” to migrant education.
- Strengthen induction programmes for the newly arrived students, especially those who arrived at an older age.
- Build capacity for municipality leaders to successfully exercise autonomy and innovation in migrant education in their own local contexts.
- Alleviate negative effects of concentration on schooling outcomes through a whole-of-government approach.
- Make better use of the available data to advance evidence-based policy and practice.

FURTHER READING

These pointers for policy development are drawn from the Policy Review of Migrant Education for Sweden (www.oecd.org/edu/migration/countrynotes). The policy review in Sweden was carried out within the framework of the OECD Reviews of Migrant Education. The overall findings of this review are presented in *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance*, published in April 2010. Policy reviews in 6 countries (Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), background reports prepared by 12 countries and other documents of the review are also available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/migration.