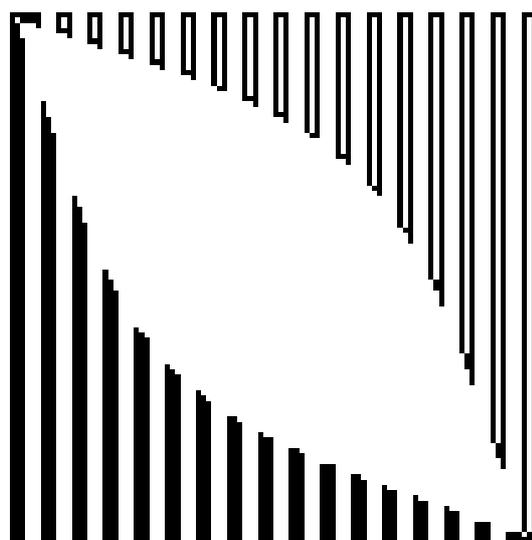


THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING



SWEDEN

BACKGROUND REPORT

JULY 2000

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INTRODUCTION

Now that we are moving into the first decade of the new millennium, we confront a world of continuous development. Rapid changes in the labour market, increasing globalisation and accelerating technological development are all factors impacting most individuals.

Changes in the surrounding world impose demands on people's ability to adapt and renew their learning throughout the course of their lives. In order to create resources to facilitate ongoing development of welfare in Sweden, it is vital that society work to actively promote continuous enhancements of the educational levels of the population. Participating in lifelong learning will, in the future, be even more necessary for the individual than it is today.

To comply with the extensive need for learning, all parties -- the individual, society and employers - will have to take responsibility for the development of knowledge and competence. The state and municipalities have the overall responsibility for providing an infrastructure for lifelong learning, as well as being able to meet and support people's needs for new knowledge and personal development. This system must be designed in such a way that it provides all citizens with incentives for continuous learning. This applies not least to those groups who are not participating today.

Apart from the learning that takes place in formal educational situations, learning also takes place in a number of other situations, both inside and outside working life. It is important that the system created also stimulate learning in informal environments and that this learning be recognised and validated. There must be linkages between formal and informal learning.

In the most recent OECD Review of Swedish educational policy published in the early 1990s, the examiners considered that adult education stood at a crossroad. A number of critical issues and areas were identified:

- Lower priority given to adult education in Government policy.
- Cuts in grants for adult education.
- Centralisation of school and adult education was replaced by decentralisation and state grants to municipalities.
- Lack of overall coherence in adult education and in co-ordination between different forms of adult education.
- A need to map the situation and future needs of adult education.
- The need for stronger linkages between general and vocational adult education.

As this report will show, Government policy since the middle of the 1990s has been aimed at bringing about improvements in these areas.

Adult education represents an important part of the overall education infrastructure. It now confronts the challenge of reform if it is to become a more effective instrument for adult learning. Since 1997 Sweden has been implementing the Adult Education Initiative at a cost of SEK 15-20 billion. The Adult Education Initiative aims at providing a platform for the ongoing reform of the adult education

system in Sweden. Wide-ranging initiatives of both a pedagogical and organisational nature are being taken in municipalities throughout Sweden.

Parallel to this, a parliamentary commission – the Commission for the Adult Education Initiative – has been charged with the task of monitoring the programme and submitting proposals for reforming adult education.

The pilot project on advanced vocational education is a further initiative. The Commission for Advanced Vocational Education submitted its final report at the end of 1999 and the Commission for the Adult Education Initiative presented its proposals on April 4th 2000. Given this background, the Government will submit a bill on adult learning from the perspective of lifelong learning.

This report is focussed on learning that takes place below university and university college level. The first Chapter provides a broad background of the development of adult learning and adult education. The second Chapter focuses on the individual as well as the conditions, opportunities and obstacles to participating in learning, whilst the third Chapter examines the supply of adult education and the different players active in this arena. The fourth and final Chapter reviews current initiatives and examines the results that have been achieved. The Chapter concludes with a review of the current situation and the probable development of adult learning in the future.

1 ADULT EDUCATION IN SWEDEN: AN OVERVIEW

1.1 Adult learners: Definitions

Adult education in Sweden has traditionally been defined from the perspective of the provider and not from that of the individual. Adult students refer to those adults who participate in some form of organised adult education, e.g. municipal adult education, folk high schools, study circles, labour market training, etc. Official statistics are based on this definition. This means that all who are studying in a folk high school or in a study circle are regarded as adult students irrespective of age. However, as a rule, adults studying on their own, learning on the job or studying at university or university colleges are not included in statistics on adult education.

In administrative terms, the dividing line between those in the regular school system and adult students in Sweden is when they reach the age of 20. The municipalities are obliged to provide education for young persons in compulsory school, upper secondary school or in other ways, up to and including the age of 19. This obligation is, to a limited extent, fulfilled within the framework of municipal adult education or folk high schools.

A student can start studying in municipal adult education in the second half of the calendar year in which he has reached the age of 20. The lower age limit for folk high schools is 18 and for immigrants studying Swedish, 16. Students younger than this can, under certain circumstances, take part in study circles. Irrespective of students' actual ages, all those studying in adult education are statistically regarded as adult students. On the other hand, adults – i.e. those aged 20 and above – also have the right to study in upper secondary school and in supplementary schools and do, to a limited extent, especially in vocationally oriented education. These persons are not usually regarded as adult students.

Students at universities and university colleges are more difficult to categorise. Traditionally, universities and university colleges are not regarded as providers of adult education in Sweden, despite the fact that the majority of their students are aged 20 or above. Almost half of those studying at university and university colleges are adult students in the sense that they have not gone directly from upper secondary school to higher education, but have been working for a few years or been at home taking care of children.

This means that providing a simple and clear definition of "adult students" in Sweden is not without its difficulties. In principle, however, the distinction between young and adult students can be set at the age of 20.

1.2 Different types of learning for adults

The terms *formal* and *informal* learning permit diverse interpretations. For this reason, we review these terms and explain the Swedish view in the introductory section of this report. It is also important to understand how learning and education are related to each other.

When looking at different forms of education, distinctions are often made between *formal education* and *non-formal education*. Formal learning may be regarded as that which takes place in an environment that is organised and structured to systematically satisfy a need for learning, whilst informal learning mainly takes place in connection with activities in daily life, inside and outside work.

However, these different types of learning seldom exist in a pure form. In an educational situation, where formal learning is dominant, informal learning also takes place outside the formal educational situation, during breaks, transfers to other courses, etc. In the informal environment, e.g. in working life, there are also elements of formal learning, such as the presentation of information material of different kinds.

Adult education is usually taken to refer to both popular adult education and the public education system for adults. Popular adult education, consisting of studies at folk high schools and in adult educational associations, is usually regarded as non-formal education. Typical of this education is that it is free and voluntary. It encompasses a large measure of informal learning since it is not subject to centrally determined curricula and syllabi. The democratic thinking underlying popular adult education puts great emphasis on the individual's independence, reflection and critical thinking. The education takes a positive view of human potential and each individual's potential for development. Some formal education also takes place in folk high schools.

Informal learning taking place mainly outside the education system has in recent years been given greater attention in Swedish educational policy. The pilot project in advanced vocational education involves a high proportion of time spent learning in working life. The Government has also recently created two commissions, one on validation and the other on individual competence accounts, which aim at creating better linkages between informal learning in working life and formal learning in the educational system.

The following section gives a brief description of different forms of education available for adults in Sweden. Different types of education and education providers are described in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.2.1 The public education system for adults

Municipal adult education (Komvux), adult education for those with functional disabilities (Särvux) and Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi) together make up the public education system for adults. The first two correspond in principle to the levels in the public school system for young persons: Compulsory school, compulsory schools for pupils with learning disabilities and the upper secondary school.

Municipal adult education (Komvux)

In municipal adult education, courses correspond to compulsory and upper secondary schooling. These follow the same curriculum, and in upper secondary municipal adult education the same syllabi, as in the school system. Participants can thus achieve the same competence and eligibility for higher education as obtained in the upper secondary school.

Orientation courses are also provided. These are shorter courses which may be based on participants' needs and aim at making it easier for them to choose study and vocational options. The courses also enhance study skills, provide an introduction to different subjects and assess the knowledge participants have in different studies. There is no centrally determined curriculum and grades are not awarded.

Supplementary education, which is based on completed upper secondary schooling, has close links with working life, and usually incorporates work practice modules.

Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux)

Särvux is directed to people with learning disabilities and aims to provide knowledge and skills corresponding to those obtained in compulsory school and upper secondary school. Teaching usually involves a high degree of informal working approaches. It usually takes place on a part-time basis and is an integral part of participants' other activities.

Swedish Tuition for Immigrants (sfi)

Swedish tuition for immigrants aims to provide newly arrived adult immigrants with a basic knowledge of Swedish and of Swedish society. Sfi is a right for those who lack such knowledge. The time spent studying varies between individuals, largely as a result of the wide variation in the time students take to achieve the goals due to a range of factors including the background and motivation of participants.

1.2.2 Pilot project for Advanced Vocational Education

The pilot project on advanced vocational education, which is a part of post-secondary vocational education, provides adults with an education closely linked to working life. Approximately one third of the education, which is often two years in duration, takes place in a work environment.

1.2.3 Complementary education

Complementary education is a form of independent schooling providing education at upper secondary and post upper secondary levels. Complementary education fulfils an important function by providing specific and valuable education, e.g. in arts and craft areas.

1.2.4 Study circles

Study circles are based on the idea that a number of adults together on their own initiative wish to deepen their knowledge in a given area. Participants appoint one of their members as the leader. Study circles are the most important activity of the *Adult education associations*. Currently, education organisers often provide a circle leader with specific knowledge in the area.

Study circles are flexible and capable of customisation. With relatively few participants (maximum 20), participants have great influence over both content and working approaches. Most study circles are conducted in the evenings, covering a total period of 20 hours. The aim of study circles is to provide subject knowledge or skills in different areas as well as contribute to personal development and greater social competence.

1.2.5 Folk High School Courses

A large degree of participant influence in content and type of method is also characteristic of folk high Schools. Studies are often thematic and inter-disciplinary with a focus on problem based working approaches. Courses are up to three years in length and comparable in terms of content to the education provided in the public education system. They can provide eligibility for both compulsory and upper secondary levels of education. There is also a broad range of courses covering arts and culture, as well as certain vocationally oriented forms of education.

1.2.6 Labour market training

The main task of this type of training is the provision of vocational education for the unemployed in order to make it easier for them to obtain work. It is a labour market policy measure decided on by the national employment office in conjunction with participants. The major part is pure vocational education, but more general theoretical courses providing initial knowledge for vocational education are also arranged.

1.2.7 In-service training

In-service training has wide coverage in Sweden. Today, it is provided mainly to develop the knowledge and experience of employees or to improve the position of the individual on the labour market. A large part of the education is carried out internally in companies, agencies or public administration bodies but some is also provided within the regular education system.

1.2.8 Education at university colleges and universities

In higher education there are approximately 300,000 students. More favourable rules for admission and financing mean that a large part of higher education is accessible to adult students aged 25 and above, who have not gone directly to higher education but have first worked for some time or studied within municipal adult education institutions.

1.3 The development of adult education

Adult education has deep-rooted traditions in Sweden. As early as the beginning of the 19th century the first folk high schools based on the Danish model were set up. At the turn of the century, the first discussion societies and study circles were started as a result of the major popular adult movements (the temperance movement, the labour movement and the free Church movement). Also at this time the first correspondence Institute, Hermods, was started. During the first half of the 20th century, a large number of technical evening schools, colleges of commerce and vocational schools were started thanks to municipal and private initiatives allowing youth and adults to take part in vocational education during the evenings.

Special evening courses involving intensive studies were started by a number of adult education associations. Two state schools for adults (SSV) were started, one in Norrköping (1956) and one in Härnösand (1962) to give adults the opportunity of acquiring an education that would provide eligibility for further studies, principally through correspondence.

1.3.1 The 1960s and 1970s: Expansion and specialisation

After the Second World War, the Swedish school system was reformed. Nine-year compulsory schooling was introduced and there was a rapid expansion of upper secondary education. During the 1960s, there was a shortage of skilled labour and the gaps between younger and older generations became increasingly evident.

A significant reform of adult education was initiated in 1968. Each municipality received responsibility for providing education for adults corresponding to compulsory education and theoretical and vocationally oriented programmes in the upper secondary school. For this they received state grants to

cover the salary costs of teachers, school heads, and study and career counsellors. Education was intended to promote the progress and development of the Swedish economy and the growth perspective was evident.

Greater attention was subsequently directed to the weak groups in society. During the earlier part of the 1970s, the focus was on redistribution policy. Support for popular adult education was increased greatly since it was regarded as being able to reach these groups. To make it even easier for these groups to take part, a number of social-study reforms were enacted, including legislation giving the right to leaves of absence for studies as well as generous support for adults to study.

Both state commissions and the trade union organisations, the Swedish Trade Union Federation (LO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), took part in the work of drawing up a new study support system. The Commission on Study Support for Adults, SVUX was appointed in 1968, and the Commission for Pilot Projects in Adult Education, FÖVUX, in 1970. In 1975 the Swedish Riksdag decided on a wide-ranging reform of study support for adult education which entered into force the following year.

The links between opportunities in the labour market and the focus on popular adult education was clearly evident. Trade unions were active in advocating greater opportunities for adult studies. It was considered that better financial conditions for studying would increase motivation for adults to study, whilst popular adult education also became an instrument for greater democratisation of society.

There was a rapid increase in municipal adult education during the 1970s and in 1982 it became an educational system in its own right with its own curriculum (Lvux 82). Opportunities for adult education were emphasised by the establishment of a special act on adult education. Substantial development work and in-service training of teachers helped municipal adult education establish its own special position as an educational system providing competence adapted to the needs and conditions of adults.

1.3.2 The late 1980s and early 1990s: Growing convergence between adult and youth education

At the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, changes were made to the division of responsibilities, the steering system and the state grant system for the whole of the education system. These involved deregulation, decentralisation, steering by goals and the "municipalisation" of the school system. The special earmarked state grant for municipal adult education was incorporated into the general appropriation for municipal schools, and later into the state's general grant to municipalities.

Following the decision on a new curriculum for non-compulsory education, municipal adult education and the upper secondary school received a common curriculum, (Lpf 94), with the same syllabi and grading system. The new curriculum (Lpo 82) was a development from the previous one (Lvux 82).

In 1991, the Swedish Riksdag also dissolved the National Board of Education, which had earlier been responsible for all adult education (popular adult education, municipal and state adult education and labour market training). Responsibility was divided amongst a number of different agencies. In 1996, responsibility for labour market training was transferred to a new independent agency, the Labour Market Board. The folk high schools were encouraged by the Government to set up a new non-commercial body, the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, which was given some official tasks. The independence of popular adult education was underlined by the fact that it had its own body enabled to carry out tasks previously accomplished by the National Board of Education. The National Agency for Education, which replaced the National Board of Education was given responsibility for the whole of the school system, including municipal and state adult education.

The first half of the 1990s was characterised by major changes in the economy, the labour market and society. New technology and new work organisations imposed higher demands on the competence of the labour force and on the unemployed if they were to be able to re-enter the labour market. High levels of unemployment led to the arrangement of special courses for the unemployed, both within the framework of traditional labour market training, in municipal adult education and at folk high schools.

1.3.3 *Adult learning in the new century*

A pilot project in advanced vocational education was initiated in 1996. It set out to provide the labour market with the new competencies which were in demand. Such education would largely be organised in conjunction with companies.

A substantial labour market and education policy initiative directed towards adults was launched in 1997, initially to reduce unemployment but also to revitalise adult education (Kunskapslyftet or Adult Education Initiative). Municipalities were given responsibility for its implementation with mandates of involving other educational organisers than those in their internal organisations. Municipalities received earmarked state grants for approximately 100,000 study places per year, mainly for upper secondary adult education; folk high schools received state grants for 10,000 study places.

At the beginning of the 1940s, only 2% of the population had a university education, whilst today the corresponding figure is approximately 25%. The expansion of higher education during the 1960s and of upper secondary schooling during the 1980s, along with the above mentioned major initiatives in adult education, have been instrumental in creating a situation today in which many people have received a higher education.

The number of places in higher education has increased by 68,000 between 1997 and 2000. This expansion has led to broader recruitment from all sectors of society. The build-up of small and medium-sized university colleges has enabled more students to be recruited from working class homes, i.e. with parents without an academic background. This group makes up 27% at these university colleges, whilst they account for only 18% at universities (National Agency for Higher Education, 1998).

1.4 Government adult education policy

The Government and the Swedish Riksdag actively promote opportunities for adults to participate in learning in a variety of ways. Adult education is used as an instrument for narrowing gaps of different kinds between groups and generations. It is an important instrument for promoting the development of the Swedish economy, supplying the labour market with a well-educated labour force and counteracting unemployment. Adult education also contributes to strengthening and developing democracy, as well as increasing welfare and quality of life.

The instruments used to promote adult education have included:

- Setting up overall goals for publicly funded adult education.
- Regulating the rights of adults to education and the obligations of educational providers.
- Wide ranging financial support to municipalities, folk high schools and adult education associations, as well as some other educational organisers.
- A generous system for study support to adults.

The overall goals of publicly funded adult education were already determined during the 1970s, and these, in principle, still apply.

In the School Act (SFS 1985:1100) the goals are formulated as follows: "The public education system for adults must give adults the opportunity to supplement their education in accordance with their individual desires. This is to enable those with least education to strengthen their position on the labour market, in working life and in cultural and political life. Each type of school must offer equivalent education irrespective of where it is provided. Activities within public education for adults should be organised in accordance with fundamental democratic values."

The overall goals for publicly funded education are formulated as follows and encompass the objectives of adult education:

- Bridge educational gaps and thereby be a force for greater equality and social justice.
- Enhance a student's ability to comprehend, critically examine and take part in cultural, social and political life and thereby contribute to the development of a democratic society.
- Educate adults for a range of professional tasks, contribute to changes in the labour market and towards the achievement of full employment, thus supporting development and progress in society.
- Meet the individual wishes of adults for greater opportunities for study and education, and give them the opportunity to supplement their formal school education.

In 1975, the Swedish Riksdag decided on a wide-ranging reform of adult education on the basis of Government proposals in The Government's Bill about an expanding adult education and study support for adults (1975:23), which entered into force the following year.

It stated that the continuing reform of adult education should be a stage towards the development of lifelong learning. Such reform should enable those with low levels of education to bridge gaps in their education.

Proposals for the improvement of the study support for adults include:

- The possibility for students to make up for income losses sustained as a result of taking leave of absence from work in order to study.
- The cover of both short and long periods of study.
- A wide range of grants.

Mainly for economic reasons, however, the reforms were never fulfilled in terms of their scope and the level of grants. The main parts of the system still apply but will be radically changed as a result of the transition to a new study support system in 2001.

The Bill "Growing with Knowledge" (990/91:85) for upper secondary school and adult education strengthened the right to education for those with low levels of education by extending the earlier obligation of satisfying adult needs for knowledge from the sixth year to also cover the ninth year in the compulsory school. The bill emphasised the Government's ambitions of creating a coherent policy for adult learning by incorporating in the public school system for adults -- apart from basic compulsory education,

municipal adult education and municipal adult education for those with learning difficulties -- Swedish tuition for immigrants as well as supplementary education. By this means the opportunities for adults to acquire education equivalent to that provided in the regular schools would be enhanced. Their right to upper secondary education was expanded by making all upper secondary education in principle three years in duration.

Concerning popular adult education, the state on the basis of Government Bills on popular adult education (1990/91:82) and on popular adult education (1997/98:115) explicitly stated its aims in the ordinance on state grants for popular adult education (SFS 1991:1977).

"The purpose of state support for popular adult education is to:

- Promote activities making it possible for women and men to influence their life situation and which create involvement for participating in the development of society.
- Strengthen and develop democracy.
- Broaden cultural interest in society, increase participation in cultural life as well as promote cultural experiences and individual creativity.
- Activities that aim at evening out educational gaps and raising educational levels in society should be given priority as should activities directed to persons who are at a disadvantage in educational, social and cultural terms. Persons with a foreign background, participants with functional impediments and the unemployed make up particularly important target groups for state support."

In addition, the Government's bill on popular adult education (1997/98:115) emphasises the need for *promoting all-around education and culture* as a complement to major initiatives aimed at adult education to raise competence. Popular adult education, originating from the educational ideals of the nineteenth century, still has great potential in the new millennium. Amongst other things, the following can be pointed out:

- The need for active citizenship.
- The culture of democracy. Today the importance of popular adult education is also an issue about safeguarding, revitalising and developing democracy and strengthening democratic culture.
- The need for cultural movements as forces to counteract brutal and repressive trends in society.

The ideals of popular adult education are more in tune with the times than ever before. Operational modes of popular adult education in folk high schools and adult education associations provide popular adult education with its own platform in an educationally oriented society. Its methods involve the participation of all and are based on participants' own experiences, their own needs for insights and knowledge. These are important criteria in all modern learning processes, both in educational contexts and in working life.

In the Bill on Employment "Halving unemployment by 2000" (1995/96:222), the Government stated the reasons for promoting *adult knowledge nation-wide*. For Sweden to be able to compete with other countries, a labour force with a high level of competence was needed. A special state initiative in adult education over a five-year period was launched to bring about a great increase in knowledge for those groups of adults who have the greatest need for education, and who had hitherto received minimal educational resources from society (the Adult Education Initiative).

The target group in the first instance is unemployed adults, who either completely or partially lack three year upper secondary schooling. In addition, the initiative should be open to employees who either completely or partially lack such competence. It should contribute to the development of new approaches to meeting the educational needs of adults.

The *Government's development plan* for the school and adult education (Skr. 1998/99:121) emphasised the importance of creating a coherent education system for adults. As a consequence of the ambitions of the Adult Education Initiative on expanding co-operation between different adult educational providers and creating education which is increasingly relevant to the needs of adults, emphasis was put on the need to identify and clarify the goals of publicly funded adult education. The following issues were also emphasised:

- Active recruitment of prioritised participants.
- Expanding counselling and municipal counselling centres.
- Flexibility and increased accessibility.
- Validating adult knowledge and competence.
- Improving accessibility to adult education for those with functional impediments and other weak groups.

1.5 Summary and analysis

The driving force for the development of adult education during the post-war era has been based on economic growth and the attempt to promote equality. The lack of skilled manpower has been one of the historical reasons for initiatives to raise the competence level of the adult population. During the 1970s and 1980s, its development was mainly driven by the attempt to bring about social equity and equality.

The political composition of the Government has reflected its involvement in adult education. In principle these areas have been given greater prominence by social democratic as opposed to non-socialist governments. Independent of party allegiance, the state of public finances has determined the framework at each point in time.

The long tradition behind popular learning, outside the framework of the formal school system, has probably contributed to a widespread belief amongst large segments of the population in learning as an important lever for bringing about change. During the last quarter of a century, this learning has been highly institutionalised. The key issue is whether new information technologies will provide new and different structures.

2 ADULT LEARNING: NEEDS, INCENTIVES AND ACCESS

2.1 Adult needs

The foundation for lifelong learning is the individual's desire to acquire new knowledge. The will to learn and develop exists in all of us from childhood. One of the most important tasks of the pre-school and the school is to maintain and stimulate desire and curiosity in learning.

All children and youth should acquire good basic knowledge and develop their social skills. Similarly adult education should correspond to the needs and requirements of each individual student. This requires a good basic education, combined with a willingness to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills.

Adult education must be prepared to continuously adapt to the speed of change in society and working life. Long established traditions in popular adult education catering to people with different backgrounds play an important role in bringing about change in adult education.

Lifelong learning means that completion of formal education in school is subsequently accompanied by further acquisition of knowledge. The responsibility for this learning is shared between the individual, the labour market and society as a whole. Continuous learning requires, among other things, an infrastructure for education which satisfies not only the individual's needs, but also the requirements of the labour market for competence development.

One stage of the Adult Education Initiative is to promote the creation of an infrastructure for adult learning, both nationally and locally. Providing effective support for adult learning in different situations requires the following:

Desire to learn

Desire to learn must be stimulated. For those who have the desire and interest in growing and developing as people throughout their lives, it is also natural to continuously learn. Despite good opportunities for education in the regular school system, many adults have experienced different types of failures in schooling. It is thus vital to be able to recreate the desire to develop and learn.

Supply of education - freedom of choice and diversity

A wide supply of education is needed from a range of different providers who can offer a variety of alternatives, not only in terms of content, pedagogy and types of activity but also rate of studying, time and place. ICT can play an important role in this context.

Counselling and guidance

In an increasingly complex society, with a labour market subject to continuous change and with a large and varied supply of education, it is necessary that adults receive sufficient help to find the most appropriate educational route for their individual circumstances. Sound guidance and counselling can contribute to the development of the individual and promote growth by, i.e. helping to remedy misguided choices which can prove costly for both the individual and society.

Customising approaches to the adult's individual circumstances

Learning as an adult means in certain respects that different conditions than those existing during schooling must be created. Typical of the adult's situation are major differences between individuals

regarding family situation, financial circumstances, the work milieu, etc. This imposes demands that the learning process take account of a variety of individual circumstances.

Study support

A flexible and well-functioning system for study financing that satisfies the need for financial security makes it easier for adults to study successfully. In the same way good and well developed child care facilities make it easier for parents to study.

Learning at the workplace

Learning will increasingly take place within the framework of or in intimate connection with one's work milieu. Not only how work is organised but also its practice need to be adjusted to this necessity.

Pedagogical approaches

Adult experiences from their work milieu, earlier studies, recreation, work in society, trade unions or political activities must be used as a resource in pedagogical work so that learning can be strengthened.

Validating

Great importance is attached to identifying competencies which individuals have acquired outside the school system or in other countries. Being able to have these validated in the formal education system is often of great importance. Such is the case of the integration of immigrants into the Swedish labour market.

2.2 System for mapping needs

Mapping educational needs takes place mainly from two different perspectives, that of the individual and that of society.

Concerning municipal adult education, there has often been joint consultation over the education provided, both at national and local levels, between central and local bodies and the partners on the labour market in order to ensure that the needs of the labour market are satisfied.

The Adult Education Initiative had high ambitions in terms of adjusting the supply of education to individual needs. The focus was on the individual and the priorities of educational providers were of secondary importance. Contacts between the municipalities, the employment offices and the parties on the labour market were intensified and led to greater co-operation at the local level.

Most municipalities have introduced targeted measures for identifying the educational needs of the unemployed. Different instruments have been used to achieve this:

- Questionnaires and individual analysis of educational needs,
- recruitment activities,
- expanding guidance and counselling,
- orientation courses.

2.2.1 Information and recruitment activities

Under the School Act, chapter 1 (SFS 91:1107), the municipalities are required to reach and encourage those who have a right to basic adult education and Swedish tuition for immigrants, and encourage them to take part in education. Concerning municipal adult education for those with learning disabilities and upper secondary adult education, the municipalities should strive to provide education corresponding to their needs and demands.

Recruitment activities are a special measure for reaching those groups who are least likely to apply for studies. In the Adult Education Initiative, special funds were set aside for educating trade union recruiters to get in touch with, inform and encourage their members to participate in adult education. This activity often takes place through the co-operation of the national employment office and the municipality.

During the first year of the Adult Education Initiative, demand for education from interested and motivated persons was very high. The municipalities thus needed to establish priorities for recruitment activities. Later the need for effective recruitment activities became increasingly clear. This applied to maintaining specific measures for identifying and encouraging those whose participation had been limited, i.e. prioritised target groups such as those with low levels of education, dyslexia and certain groups of immigrants. One of the challenges that remains for the future is to recruit and motivate people from these groups to a greater extent than hitherto. Recruitment activities of trade union representatives have produced good results in reaching these groups.

Co-operation between municipalities and local employment offices should be increased and developed and also cover other education providers, particularly those within popular adult education who traditionally have enjoyed great success in reaching groups with low levels of education, immigrants and participants with functional impediments.

The instruments used are different types of informational meetings, brochures and other printed material. Information is also disseminated to an increasing extent by means of ICT. The vast majority of municipalities – and many providers – today have their own web page for the Adult Education Initiative on the Internet, where information on courses, applications, study guidance etc is available.

During the spring of 2000, the Government has taken the initiative in launching a nation-wide campaign, the *Knowledge Week*, to present and increase awareness of the extent and diversity existing in adult and popular adult education in Sweden. The aim is also to increase awareness of the need for lifelong learning arising from the changing needs of the labour market and society. The campaign is run in conjunction with the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, municipalities and other educational providers. The Knowledge Week will be followed up by a more comprehensive campaign in 2001.

2.2.2 Study and vocational guidance

Vocational guidance and counselling is important not only to encourage people to take part in education and work, but to map educational needs, stimulate interest in learning and to support non-traditional educational choices. The need for guidance increases not only as a result of a large and varied range of programmes but also as a result of changes in content of work.

Different individuals have different needs for guidance. For some it is sufficient to have a discussion with a guidance counsellor, where they can examine all conceivable educational routes for reaching the desired goal, discuss financial implications of studying, and draw up an overall plan for their studies. For others a longer process is involved, which can be satisfied by *orientation courses* that provide participants with a better basis for choosing their study options. These courses can provide better study

skills and work as an introduction to subsequent learning. This method of starting to study is particularly suitable for those who are unsure about their choice of study or occupation, who may have negative experiences from earlier studies or need motivation and greater self-confidence prior to more extended studies.

Study and vocational counselling is a pedagogical process which requires co-operation between counsellors and teachers. From the very start, the individual perspective has been given prominence in the Adult Education Initiative. For this reason it is emphasised that all who require education must be offered individual study counselling and *an individual study plan*.

The aim of an individual study plan is to clarify the goals individuals have as regards their studies and how their studying should be organised. For long-term unemployed persons, the national employment office has an obligation to draw up individual action plans, the purpose of which is that they should lead to employment for the individual. For these persons the action plan can be a starting point for individual study plans.

Many municipalities have taken the initiative in bringing about co-operation between different players within the framework of *local vocational guidance counselling centres*. The aim of these is to create a forum where residents in a municipality can receive guidance and information on the range of education available and help in drawing up individual study plans.

2.3 Target groups

Adult education in Sweden has always had a highly compensatory focus, i.e. people who for different reasons have not received the education they need should be given the opportunity to supplement it. Adult education is now regarded as a tool in lifelong learning, societal development and growth.

2.3.1 Unemployed

The unemployed are an important target group of adult education. A number of measures have specifically targeted this group in all forms of adult education.

For some time labour market training has been used as a tool to promote an active labour market policy. This training has been vocationally oriented and aims at helping participants get work as rapidly as possible.

One of the main goals of the Adult Education Initiative is to recruit unemployed persons to education in order to strengthen their position on the labour market. Surveys carried out indicate that the group who was unemployed during the 1990s has a better education than those who are currently working. Opportunities for the unemployed to find work in the strong economy prevailing today are thus regarded as good.

2.3.2 Persons with functional impediments

The principles underlying handicap policy mean that adults with functional impediments should have the same opportunities for education as other adults. Adults with functional impediments also have the right to special support to benefit from education. Educational providers have in principle the obligation of ensuring that education is accessible to those with physical, visual and hearing impairments.

During 1998, the state contributed approximately SEK 200 million in additional resources for special measures to students with functional impediments at folk high schools. The state is also running comprehensive education for those with functional impediments through the Swedish National Labour Market Administration, both at special labour market institutes and within the framework of labour market training.

County councils are responsible for providing assistance to people with functional impediments, in order to make participation in education of different kinds easier. Municipalities are responsible for, amongst other things, personal assistance to people with functional impediments and physical handicaps.

2.3.3 Immigrants

Immigrants are and have long been a priority group for adult education. Immigrants experience great difficulties in entering the Swedish labour market, even though in many cases they have a high level of education from their country of origin. It is a disadvantage for immigrants not to be able to get their competence validated so that they can secure appropriate employment, particularly since society today is interested in having as many young persons as possible entering the labour market.

For immigrants, it is of the utmost importance that they obtain a good knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish society. Often immigrants' knowledge of Swedish is regarded as inadequate in relation to the demands of the labour market. Swedish tuition for immigrants has been criticised as being too theoretical. A number of attempts have been made in different municipalities to link teaching more closely to the work environment through different work practices.

Measures have also been taken at the beginning of 2000 to validate the vocational competence of immigrants as a means of increasing and accelerating their entry into the labour market.

There is a high proportion of immigrants (more than 60%) in basic adult education, whilst the proportion in other forms of education is lower than the proportion of immigrants as a whole throughout the country (approximately 20%). Immigrants are thus a group which, to a greater extent today, must be recruited in studies.

2.3.4 Males with low levels of education

The Adult Education Initiative should reach new groups who earlier have not applied for adult education and it should also contribute to changing gender patterns on the labour market. A special target group which has received attention in recent years are males with low levels of education. Of those taking part in municipal adult education, two thirds are women.

Some municipalities are also making special efforts to recruit men, for instance through special orientation courses. Experiences show that many men in this group are not attracted by studies of a general nature, but are more interested in vocational subjects. For this reason some providers also offer specially oriented education programmes combining general subjects and vocational subjects in which participants are interested.

AMS and the National Agency for Education have taken the initiative in a project, together with LO, TCO and ten municipalities, to explore new ways of recruiting more men and obtaining more knowledge on why men with low levels of education do not choose to participate in adult education.

2.4 Participation: Motives and incentives

Goals for individual participation in adult education are often either furthering studies, competence development in order to obtain a new job, vocational or personal growth or improvement. For the individual, benefits of education translate often into better opportunities to get work, lower risk of unemployment and a higher income. Also for society and employers education is usually profitable. Revenues are often greater than the costs of education. Education is still more "profitable" when factors such as personal development, quality of life and educational level are taken into account.

One Swedish study indicates that in Sweden education and on-the-job experience usually have a positive impact on salaries. Labour market training appears to have the greatest effect when it is directed to those with low levels of education.

The most important conditions for adults to take part in education and competence development are that they gain not only financial opportunities to participate but also access to education. In addition, an important pre-condition for employees is being able to get time off work.

2.4.1 Right to leave of absence for studying¹

Everyone who has been employed for at least six consecutive months or a total of at least 12 months during the last two years has the right to leave of absence to study, although it is not an absolute right to leave of absence at the specific time requested. The employer has the right to postpone giving a leave of absence for a maximum of six months. There is, according to the law, no requirement that the education should be professionally oriented towards the employee's job. Also, those who wish to prepare themselves for a new occupation have the right to a leave of absence. However, it is not permissible to use this as a means of pursuing what might be described as a "hobby".

Employees themselves determine whether the studies should be full-time or part-time and whether the studies should be open-ended or concluded by a specific point in time. In the legislation there is no limit to how long leave of absence may be. How studies are organised and thus the leave of absence required is up to the employee to determine.

When the employee returns to work after leave of absence, he/she has the right to the same or equivalent working and employment conditions as before. The employee always has the right to return to work as soon as the leave of absence is over.

2.4.2 Different forms of study support

One of the most important means of stimulating adult learning is through the availability of good conditions for financing their studies. For many decades in Sweden there have been a number of different study support options available to adults: special adult study support (SVUX), special adult study support for unemployed (SVUXA) and study allowances. In connection with the start of the Adult Education Initiative a new form of study support was introduced for adults, the special educational grants (UBS).

These forms of support are administered by a special authority, The National Board of Student Aid (CSN), which is assisted by regional offices in each county. Swedish study support is an important

1 . Right to leave of absence for studying (SFS 1974:981).

instrument of education policy. Sweden provides adults with very good opportunities for studying and study support should eliminate the obstacles for different people to study.

CSN is an important player in adult education. Today approximately 590,000 people receive study support from CSN. CSN works together with other authorities as well as private companies to create better conditions for those who are studying. This can also involve discounts for travel and insurance.

Since study support is such an important factor for adult participants, it is vital that the system functions effectively. The rules concerning different forms of study support are highly complex, which sometimes leads to different types of problems for students.

Table 1. Students receiving study support, 1999

Type of study support	Number of students (budget year 1999)
Study allowances, upper secondary level	109,700
Study allowances, post upper secondary level	307,200
SVUX	25,500
SVUXA	41,300
UBS	109,100
<i>Total</i>	<i>592,800</i>

Source: National Board of Student Aid, 1999, *The annual report of the National Board of Student Aid, 1999*.

SVUX (Special Adult Study Support)

SVUX is for adult studies at compulsory and upper secondary levels. In order to receive SVUX, applicants must have been gainfully employed for at least four years. Other activities are regarded as being equivalent to gainful employment, e.g. care of own children, completion of military service and non-combatant military service. The upper age limit is 50, although support can be granted to older applicants on special grounds. This means that those between the ages of 51 and 60 are in a good position to receive support under SVUX. The amount of support is limited and studies at compulsory level are given priority.

The major portion of financial support is provided in terms of grants, rising to 65% of the unemployment benefit to which an applicant is entitled with a maximum of SEK 8,280 per month. In addition, a student can borrow a maximum of SEK 2,850 per month.

SVUXA (Special Adult Study Support for the Unemployed)

SVUXA is for adult studies at compulsory and upper secondary level. The basic condition for receiving SVUXA is that the applicant is fully or partially unemployed immediately prior to the onset of studies and at is least 20 years old during the year when starting studies. Given special reasons, support requires that applicants have been gainfully employed for at least three years. Other forms of activity are regarded as being equivalent to gainful employment e.g. care of one's own children. The upper age limit is 50. If exceptional grounds exist, however, support can be granted to older persons. This means that those between the ages of 51 and 60 are able to receive support under SVUXA. The amount of study support is the same as for SVUX.

UBS (Special Education Grants)

UBS are for adult studies at compulsory and upper secondary levels. The applicant must be at least 25 and a maximum of 55 years of age when studies start. Support is granted only to applicants who do not possess three year upper secondary school competence or its equivalent. Exceptions can be made if there are special reasons, e.g. a particularly long period of unemployment in combination with an out of date upper secondary education.

Another important condition is that applicants at the beginning of their studies must fulfil the conditions for receiving unemployment benefits. Special educational grants are available for both those who are unemployed and who have taken leave of absence from work to study. For an employed person to receive support the applicant must have been working for at least five years and, during this study period, the employer must undertake to employ another person who has been unemployed for a long time.

The special education grant is made up to the amount that would be received as an unemployment benefit, currently a maximum of SEK 12,780 per month and is liable to tax. Grants for studies can also be awarded for up to 25%, 50%, 75% or 90% of the employee's full-time salary. Unemployment benefit is 80% of the salary received before unemployment up to an income level of SEK 16,000 per month.

Study allowance

Study allowances can be granted for studies at university, university college or other post secondary education as well as for folk high schools, municipal or state adult education or other forms of upper secondary education. The upper age limit for this support is 45 years old, although under exceptional grounds study allowance support can also be granted after that age.

Study allowance consists of a grant component currently SEK 1,984 and a loan component of a maximum of SEK 7,137 per month.

For loans given after 1988, repayment of the loan is at the rate of 4% of income per year. Interest is fixed each year and is usually at a level significantly lower than for bank loans. The loan is written off at the age of 65, at the time of death or if special circumstances warrant.

2.4.3 Access to education

Today there is a very wide supply of adult education in Sweden. There are hardly any formal obstacles for adults who wish to acquire an education. Conditions are very generous and geographical obstacles have also largely been bridged through distance learning.

Swedish adult education can be characterised as being free and voluntary and in principle open to all. As a rule, the only requirement for participation is that the applicant should be a resident of the country, i.e. in the case of immigrants that they have been granted a residence permit and are registered in a municipality. There are, in addition, certain age-related requirements. Eligibility requirements for publicly financed or state supported adult education are regulated under the School Act or in ordinances issued by the Government.

For persons with a number of dependants, there are certain financial obstacles, but available study support opportunities are very good, especially for people with low levels of education and weak positions on the labour market. Any obstacles currently existing to participation in adult education are principally of a psychological character.

2.5 Summary and analysis

Opportunities for adults in Sweden to take part in different forms of learning have long been very good. Good study financing, a wide range of alternative educational providers and low admission requirement rules have made it possible for a very large segment of the adult Swedish population to participate in some form of education.

For many years adult education has been oriented towards the weakest groups in society. Those who earlier received the smallest amount of educational resources are given priority. Apart from this goal which is oriented to the individual's needs, other goals in adult education have been increasingly emphasised in recent years. For instance, the Adult Education Initiative has also focused on providing competence for working life and improving Sweden's position to compete in world markets by means of a highly skilled labour force.

3 ORGANISERS OF ADULT EDUCATION

3.1 The role of the Government

Adult education in Sweden is comprehensive and has well-established traditions. From the 1960s, the Government changed its view of adult education. Adult education was given the important task of supplying the Swedish labour market with a well-educated labour force, educating the unemployed and contributing to economic growth. During the 1970s, the focus was on redistribution policy. Trade union organisations, especially LO and TCO, were active in advocating greater opportunities for adult studies. Currently, the Government wishes to safeguard the variety of adult education that exists today as well as contribute to a development which improves educational outcomes for individuals and society.

The goals cover both a societal and individual perspective. Adult education should promote economic development and growth. At the same time it should contribute to the development of democracy. Adult education should also contribute to providing the individual with opportunities for growth and development and reduce the educational gaps between different groups in society.

Popular adult education has become increasingly dependent on state grants. From the onset, the Government has showed its commitment to adult education by making state grants available to folk high schools and study circles. National Schools for Adults are also almost totally financed by the state. Other government programmes include municipal adult education (introduced in 1968), labour market training and in-service training (an on-going pilot project since the 1980s). While municipal adult education is more regulated than popular education, its programmes are less constrained than those of regular schools to decide their organisation and range of courses. The most strictly regulated of government form of adult education is labour market training, where employment agencies (under the auspices of the county labour board) consider the best avenues of learning for participants receiving state grants.

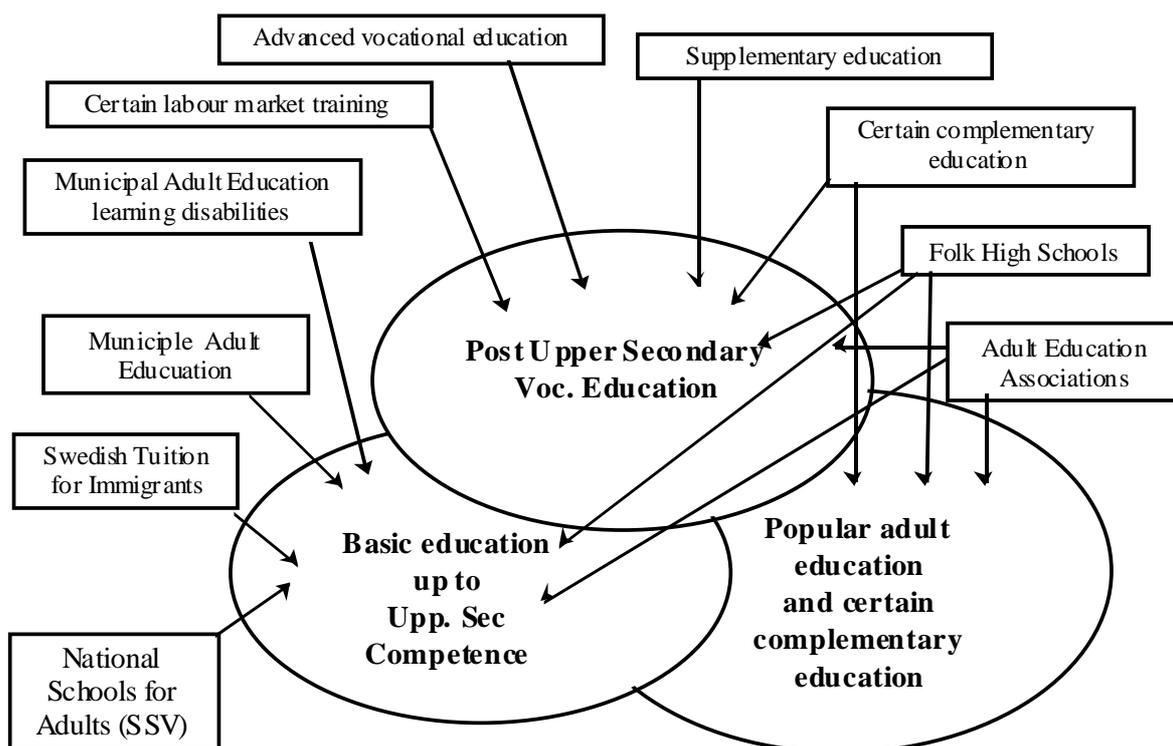
3.2 Adult education structure

In order to clarify the expansion of adult education towards new educational needs, state supported adult education can be described in terms of three main areas:

- Basic education up to completion of upper secondary schooling,

- advanced vocational training,
- popular adult education, and certain complementary education.

Figure 1. Structure of adult education in Sweden



The goal for *basic education up to upper secondary competence* is to provide participants with knowledge and skills that everyone needs for the labour market and for lifelong learning. Given current demands this level can be regarded at present as corresponding to regular upper secondary schooling. Basic education is today provided by municipal adult education (Komvux), adult education for those with learning disabilities (Särvux), Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi), national schools for adults (SSV) as well as by folk high schools and adult education associations. It is the intention of the Government that opportunities for education corresponding to regular upper secondary schooling will also subsequently be provided to all adults, who either completely or partially lack upper secondary education.

Post secondary vocational education covers those types of education which in practice presuppose completion of upper secondary education and are directed towards a specific vocational area or aim at satisfying a specific labour market need. Post-secondary vocational education for adults exists today mainly in the form of a pilot project in advanced vocational education (KY), in municipal adult education as well as supplementary education and labour market training. In addition, adult education courses are also in this sector.

Popular adult education (folk high schools and adult education associations) as well as certain *complementary education* also provide education, which in the first instance is not intended to provide formal competence or skills for a specific occupation. Popular education fulfils an important function in society, not least to safeguard and develop democracy and active citizenship. Complementary education enriches the supply of education, which otherwise would not be available, in such areas as handicrafts and arts. Popular adult education and complementary education are intended for people who wish to study different types of subjects, ranging from socially oriented courses to those primarily intended for personal development.

3.3 Providers of adult education

Table 2. Providers of adult education

Provider	Number of participants during a week in autumn 1998	Proportion of females (%) (1998)
Adult Education Associations	2 815 679	57
Folk high school	104 530	60
Municipal Adult Education	237 510	68
Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities	4 137	44
Swedish Tuition for Immigrants (Sfi)	20 460	61
National Schools for Adults (SSV)	111 862	66
Labour market training	41 899	46
Complementary education	1 914	69
University colleges and universities (undergraduate education)	305 581	58

Source: Statistics Sweden, 1998 (SCB).

3.3.1 Municipalities

Municipal adult education

When *municipal adult education* was introduced in 1968, the same financing principle as for other municipal schooling was applied, i.e. the state paid the salary costs of head teachers and teachers, whilst the municipalities supplied premises, equipment and covered other salary costs. Education would in principle be free of charge for participants. Since municipal adult education was obliged to provide eligibility for higher education, it was regulated much more strictly than popular adult education in terms of curricula, syllabi and grading systems. On the other hand, municipal adult education had much greater freedom than the regular school to decide its own organisation and the range of courses it would provide. In 1991, financing of municipal adult education was transferred from the state to the municipalities.

Municipal adult education provides education at three levels:

- Basic adult education, which corresponds to compulsory schooling.
- Upper secondary adult education, which corresponds to upper secondary schooling.
- Supplementary education which, in principle, covers post upper secondary education.

Basic municipal adult education is a right for all municipal inhabitants residing in Sweden from the second half of the year in which they become 20 years of age. Each municipality is obliged to provide such education to all municipal inhabitants who need and desire it, either within their own municipality or through inter-municipal payment to the municipality arranging the education when the home municipality is not able to provide equivalent education.

The same right does not exist for *upper secondary adult education* and *supplementary education* but under the School Act there is a provision that "municipalities should endeavour to provide upper secondary education and supplementary education, commensurate with individual demands and needs". Each municipal inhabitant residing in the country, who has reached the age of 20 and has completed education in a national programme in the upper secondary school, has the opportunity to participate in adult upper secondary education and supplementary education.

For some supplementary education with nation-wide recruitment, the student's home municipality, at the time a decision on admission is taken, is obliged to remunerate the municipality arranging the education.

For an applicant to be eligible for upper secondary adult and supplementary education, the following conditions must be met:

- The applicant does not possess or has incomplete knowledge of the subject which the course will provide.
- The applicant is able to follow the teaching.

For selection to upper secondary adult education, certificates received earlier are not taken into account and preference is given to those who have the greatest need for education. However, for supplementary education, certificates from upper secondary schools or upper secondary adult education can be used as a basis for selection.

Both basic and upper secondary adult education are largely organised in terms of courses. This means that each subject is divided into one or more courses. In principle, all national courses within the upper secondary school are provided. In addition, municipalities may arrange courses to satisfy local needs. Each course can be studied separately and a certificate obtained on completion. Duration of a course can vary for different participants. A course may either be for a short period or spread out over a longer period.

Courses can be provided during the day, evenings, weekends and over the summer. Different types of courses can be combined into an individual study programme which is unique for each individual and courses from compulsory and upper secondary levels can also be combined (as with vocational general subjects courses).

On completion of studies participants obtain an overall grade or final certificate.

Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux)

For those with learning disabilities, the same eligibility regulations as those for upper secondary adult education apply, in principle.

Since 1996-1997, municipalities have been the principal organisers of this education. Participants who are at least 20 years of age can study a single subject or a combination of subjects. Participants' levels of knowledge and study skills, however, determine the organisation and length of the studies. The number of participants in these programmes has increased over recent years and currently amounts to approximately 4,000 persons.

Swedish language tuition for immigrants (sfi)

Special conditions apply to Swedish tuition for immigrants. All persons who reside in a municipality and lack basic knowledge in Swedish, have the right to start studying Sfi in the second half of the year they become 16 years of age. Each municipality is obliged to provide Swedish tuition for registered immigrants as soon as possible within a three-month period of their registration.

Swedish tuition for adult immigrants is mainly financed through state grants. Each municipality receiving refugees, receives a standard grant for each individual, which covers tuition for Swedish classes. Swedish tuition for immigrants who have arrived earlier and who are not refugees are financed within the framework of the general state grant allocated to the municipalities.

Responsibility for Swedish tuition for adult immigrants rests with the municipalities. They can choose to provide the education from within their own organisation or commission other providers. In 1995/96, Swedish language tuition covered approximately 50,000 individuals, but in recent years this has declined somewhat due to a decrease in immigration.

Good results have been obtained through combining theory with practice in Sfi. There are many examples of immigrants rapidly acquiring a good command of Swedish through learning at the workplace, where language can be learned in a natural context.

3.3.2 National schools for adults

Admission to the National Schools for Adults is regulated in principle by the same provisions as for municipal upper secondary adult education. These schools are almost totally financed by the state and they receive resources from the Adult Education Initiative.

The primary task of both National Schools for Adults in Norrköping and Härnöping has been to enable adults via distance learning to acquire upper secondary competence mainly through correspondence courses, ICT courses or “sandwiched” courses (i.e. intensive study periods at school).

Adult education programmes are also regulated so that the curriculum, syllabi and grading system of the regular school may be applied here as well. They thus represent a complement to municipal adult education.

3.3.3 Folk High Schools

For a folk high school to receive state grants, the education should be free of charge. To be admitted to a general course at a folk high school, students must be over the age of 18. Folk high schools

may, however, accept younger students who are attending an individual programme in the upper secondary school for which the municipality is responsible.

At present there are 147 folk high schools in Sweden. The majority of folk high schools are owned by the popular movements and other organisations and together they co-operate within the framework of RIO (Interest Organisation of Popular Movement Folk High Schools). Other folk high schools have either county councils or regions as principal organisers.

The folk high schools run two types of courses, shorter courses between 2 and 14 days and longer courses of 15 or more days. Even though the short courses have the greatest number of participants in a year (approximately 160,000), it is the longer courses which account for the highest proportion of students (approximately 90%). The Commission for the Adult Education Initiative has estimated the total volume of education at folk high schools as being around 34,000 annual study places.

More than half of the courses at folk high schools are in general subjects at compulsory and upper secondary school level, where the core subjects Swedish, English, mathematics and social studies are important elements. The folk high schools also run to a limited extent vocationally oriented education, especially for youth recreation leaders and courses in information, communications, computers and finance. Also aesthetic and music education are highly popular at folk high schools. The general courses in folk high schools at the upper secondary level provide eligibility for higher education.

The folk high schools have received special resources to provide 10,000 annual study places within the framework of the Adult Education Initiative.

3.3.4 *Adult Education Associations*

Study circles and culture programmes run by the adult education associations receive financial grants from the state and the municipality. In addition, adult education associations have the right to charge participants fees.

Courses are open to all irrespective of whether the adult education associations have political or religious organisations as their main organiser. Most adult education associations, in addition, run a wide range of activities for members of its main organiser.

In addition to those activities entitled to state grants, adult education associations also provide courses on a commissioned basis where the purchaser is responsible for the financing, notifying of participants and determination of content.

Study circles run by these associations reach most people with the exception of those training in-house. The eleven adult education associations run study circles within a widely diverging range of areas. The main emphasis is in the aesthetic area, covering arts, singing and music. Thereafter follow circles in socially oriented subjects, concerning such issues as energy, the environment, the European Union etc. There are also a large number of language circles. The adult education associations cater to approximately 2.8 million course participants per year. Since the study circle is, as a rule, quite short, an individual can take part in a number of different circles in the course of a year. It is estimated that more than 1 million persons take part in study circles over a year.

Adult education associations also provide a relatively small part of courses available under the Adult Education Initiative – approximately 4%– mainly in the form of preparatory education for higher studies and orientation courses.

Box 1. Largest Study Associations in Sweden

Adult Educational Association of Swedish Farmers' Union and the Centre and Liberal Parties SV (Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan) is an association for non-formal adult education, training and culture. Operations are divided up into about 270 local branches and 22 districts which act independently on the basis of the needs in each region. SV is rapidly becoming a leading local force in Sweden in areas such as culture, environment, social issues, international co-operation and democratic development. Among SV's members are the Federation of Swedish Farmers, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party and the National Federation of Rural Community Centres. SV was established in 1967 after a merger of two organisations that was active in the non-formal adult education field.

The Citizens' Adult Educational Association (Medborgarskolan) was founded in 1940. It is a non-political association based on humanistic ideology. Some of the member organizations are Moderata amlingspartiet (the Conservative Party) Aktiva Seniorer (an organization for senior citizens) and Aktiv Ungdom (a youth organization).

Educational Association of NonConformist Churches in Sweden (Frikyrkliga studieförbundet, FS). The member organizations comprise the free churches and their youth organizations, immigrant denominations and ecumenical organizations.

The Educational Association of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens bildningsverksamhet, TBV) was founded in 1935 and has since then been providing popular education for salaried employees with a view to personal and professional development as well as for trade union activity.

Folkuniversitetet (Folkuniversitetet) is a non-profit organisation in the field of adult education. It is an association of the Extramural Departments attached to the Universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Göteborg, Lund and Umeå.

Sobriety Movement's Educational Association (Nykterhetsrörelsens bildningsverksamhet, NBV) has 17 temperance organizations as members and is uncommitted to any religion or political party.

Study Promotion Association (Studiefrämjandet). Most of the member organizations are all involved in nature and in environmental, ecological or cultural awareness and have no political, religious or trade union base.

Swedish Christian Educational Association (Sveriges kyrkliga studieförbund, SKS). The member organizations are mainly within the Church of Sweden, the Catholic Church and the Scout movement.

Swedish Sport Confederation Adult Educational Association (Svenska idrottsrörelsens studieförbund, SISU) is the adult Study Association of the sport movements.

The Workers' Educational Association (Arbetarnas bildningsförbund, ABF) has its roots in the Labour movements' organizations. Many organizations for the disabled and the immigrants are also members.

The YWCA/YMCA Study Association (KFUK-KFUM:s studieförbund). Most of the work is carried out in co-operation with the member organisations, i.e. the Swedish Evangelical Mission and the different branches of the YWCA –YMCA movement in Sweden.

Source: <http://www.folkbildning.se>

3.3.5 Complementary education

Other education providers catering mainly to adults through *complementary education* are, in formal terms, private independent schools. They mainly run education within handicrafts and arts areas. It can be provided both at upper secondary and post upper secondary levels. At the post upper secondary level, entry requirements – as a rule – are completion of upper secondary school and in some cases evidence of relevant skills or vocational experience. Education is largely financed from fees paid by students, but in certain cases students may receive financing through state grants or be entitled to study support. Some schools are not entitled to receive state grants, but study support.

3.3.6 Labour market training

Labour market training is part of Sweden's general labour market policies aimed at stability and redistribution of growth, promoting effective matching between the supply and demand for labour.

Labour market policy is the most strictly regulated form of adult training. It is financed entirely by the state (the Swedish National Labour Market Administration). Training is arranged by the country labour board through which participants receive educational grants to support themselves whilst studying. In principle, participants are not able to choose for themselves which educational system they wish attend. They are instead directed towards different courses which employment agencies consider could lead to work.

Labour market training is usually vocationally oriented with the goal of leading to employment. However, it can also be made up of shorter general theoretical or specific education which prepares for subsequent vocational education. It is directed primarily towards the unemployed, especially the long-term unemployed who have the weakest position on the labour market. It may consist of Swedish language courses for immigrants which helps them prepare for or integrate into the labour market. The unemployed can be assigned labour market training in higher education corresponding to a maximum of 40 week studies. Refugees who have received residence and work permits and persons in prison may, under certain circumstances, receive labour market training. Such training also applies to young persons with functional impediments who have not yet reached the age of 20. Labour market training may also be applied to enhancing the position of the employed person. Since the 1980s, the state has facilitated a service called *in-service training*, an on-going project enabling labour market partners to run in-service training. Essentially, employed adults may, under certain circumstances, receive labour market training in-house. The precondition for this is that there is a lack of vocational skills in a specific area, or that participants should have the opportunity to develop their own business ideas by starting their own companies or co-operatives. A commission is currently examining how a system for individual competency could be designed.

3.3.7 Private organisers

Virtually half of all labour market training is carried out by private educational providers and approximately one-third by Lernia (formerly the AmuGruppen), a state owned educational company. The remainder is provided by upper secondary schools, municipal adult education, popular adult education and university colleges. Labour market training consists mainly of vocational education in engineering, electrical engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computers etc. Labour market training reached its peak when the average number of participants per month was approximately 86,000 persons. Since then labour market training has – as a result of a tighter labour market – progressively declined and in 1999 covered on the average 44,950 persons per month, of which 63% were attending vocationally oriented education and 37% preparatory education for further studies.

In 1986, labour market training was changed. A state authority, the AMU Group, was created and at the same time it became possible for other educational organisers to provide commissioned education for the county labour boards. This change opened the doors to a substantial private educational market. During the 1990s there was a decline in labour market training, but the start of the Adult Education Initiative in 1997 provided new stimulus for the education market.

In the Adult Education Initiative there was an explicit goal that private education organisers would also be used, especially to provide adults with the opportunity of acquiring a modern vocationally oriented education. The proportion of private educational organisers has progressively increased and in 1998/99 accounted for approximately 30% of the total volume. In some of the larger municipalities nearly half of the places in the Adult Education Initiative have been procured from private education organisers.

The increase in in-service training and procurement of labour market training courses under the Adult Education Initiative has contributed to a large number of educational organisers entering the market.

The best-known of these education companies are Eductus, InfoKomp AB, Lexicon, and MiROi Utbildning. Lernia AB also competes on the private education market. A number of these education companies have concentrated on courses in computers, media, finance and/or technology.

Liber Hermods has specialised in distance learning, and in language teaching there are number of companies including Berlitz International, Sweden AB and EF Education.

These companies give courses in subject areas such as business administration, commerce and administration, technology, work organisation, management, ICT and/or languages. A number of these companies have a turnover of more than SEK 150 million per year and between 100 and 200 employees. There are also a large number of smaller educational companies with just a few employees, where educational personnel are recruited for specific assignments.

In the pilot project on advanced vocational education around 20% of education is carried out by private education companies.

3.3.8 Higher education

In Sweden there are 36 institutions of higher education. These are made up of 10 universities and 26 university colleges. The number of students in undergraduate programmes is approximately 300,000. The number of new students in recent years has been approximately 65,000 per year, of which 55% are women. The majority of degree courses are in law, social sciences, teaching, technology and health care sciences.

Sweden has a tradition of structuring its education system so that "dead-ends" can be avoided, and this also applies to higher education. Older applicants have good opportunities to study in higher education, mainly for the following reasons:

- The possibility of being able to study courses in municipal adult education or folk high school courses provide eligibility to higher education. Adults may also get credit points for their work experience.
- Ability to supplement grades in order to raise average grades.
- The 25:4 rule allows applicants without a formal upper secondary background to apply for higher education studies, which means that adults aged 25 or more with four years work experience are eligible for higher education providing they have competence in Swedish and English corresponding to upper secondary schooling.
- Admission on the basis of results in the university aptitude entrance examination.
- Financial support system for studying in Sweden.

As a consequence, undergraduate students in Sweden find that relatively more of their fellow students are "somewhat older" and also that many begin higher education studies relatively late. Almost 43% of those studying at university and university colleges can be described as adult students in the sense that they have not gone directly from upper secondary school to higher education, but have first been studying in a folk high school or municipal adult education and have accumulated several years of vocational experience.

Indications that there are a large number of older students is borne out by the discussion which has taken place for some years in the higher education sector on how difficult it is for younger students to gain entry. This dilemma will become even more evident in the future given the goal set up in the budget

bill for year 2000 where, "in the long-term at least half of an age cohort should have begun studies by the time they reach the age of 25".

3.4 Evaluation of adult education

Follow-up and evaluation of publicly funded adult education is the responsibility of the National Agency for Education, the Labour Market Board, the National Agency for Higher Education and the Swedish National Council of Adult Education. Whilst the first three bodies mentioned are the central regulatory bodies, the Swedish National Council of Adult Education is a non-commercial body with the responsibilities of an agency.

The National Agency for Education

Responsibility for the school was changed in 1991 and the National Board of Education was dissolved and replaced by the National Agency for Education. It is responsible for pre-school and child care (since 1998), compulsory school, upper secondary school and the *public education system for adults*.

The earlier central steering system was replaced in 1991 by a system of management by objectives with a large degree of local autonomy. Municipalities were given responsibility for the organisation, personnel and school resources. The Swedish Riksdag and the Government draw up the national goals and guidelines for child care, the school and adult education in Sweden. In the School Act, the curriculum and in different ordinances, there are provisions that steer the contents of child care, the school and guarantee equivalent education irrespective of where in the country it is provided. As a part of achieving national equivalence, the National Agency for Education is responsible for drawing up national syllabi and grade criteria.

The task of the National Agency is to actively work for the attainment of the national goals for child care, the school and adult education. The National Agency for Education has been charged by the state with evaluating different types of education and, through follow-up and inspection, contribute to their development.

For examining quality and evaluating the Swedish school system, there is a system of national education inspectors.

The Swedish National Labour Market Administration

The Swedish National Labour Market Administration comprises the *Swedish National Labour Market Board (AMS)* and a *county labour board* in each county. The Swedish National Labour Market Administration, through the provision of information on jobs available, guidance, vocationally oriented rehabilitation and education, works for a better functioning labour market. This work is based on local conditions and needs.

AMS is the central administrative authority for general labour market issues and is the authority responsible for the county labour boards. In particular, AMS should:

- Lead, co-ordinate and develop labour market policy activities throughout the country.
- Draw up goals and guidelines for the activities of the county labour boards as well as follow-up and evaluate the results of their activities.
- Allocate resources.

County labour boards also have as members the *national employment office* and the *Labour Market Institute*. The *employment office board* is at the municipal level, where representatives from the local employment office, the municipality, local industry and employee organisations co-ordinate their activities.

The National Agency for Higher Education

The National Agency for Higher Education, established in 1995, is a central agency responsible for issues concerning universities and university colleges. Among its different tasks are following-up and supervising the activities of universities and university colleges and helping university colleges renew themselves, develop their pedagogy and improve quality.

The Agency is responsible for the provision of study information and a number of international issues within the area of higher education. In addition, it is responsible for the university aptitude test, statistics on higher education and co-ordination of the Swedish university computer network.

All universities and university colleges are essentially public institutions directly accountable to the Government. The state is responsible for national educational planning whilst higher education institutions have local responsibilities. The role of the National Agency for Higher Education is thus to assist in providing a basis for decisions and assessments at the national and local level.

The National Agency for Higher Education is sometimes confused with the National Service Agency for Higher Education (VHS) which works on behalf of the universities and university colleges, particularly on co-ordinating admissions to higher education.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education was formed in 1991 primarily to administer the allocation of state grants to popular adult education. The Council is a non-commercial organisation with the functions of an authority and has three member organisations:

- The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations represents the 11 adult education associations.
- The Federation of Swedish County Councils represents the folk high schools which have the county councils and municipalities as their principal organiser.
- RIO (the Interest Organisation of Popular Movement Folk High Schools) represents the folk high schools which have the popular movements and other organisations as principal organiser.
- The Swedish National Council of Adult Education has been given some of the National Agency's functions:
 - Allocate general and special state grants to activities.
 - Follow-up and evaluate activities of adult education associations and folk high schools.
 - Submit budgetary material and annual reports.
 - Develop the Popular Adult Education Network.
 - Contribute to development in the ICT area In conjunction with the Distance Education Agency in Härnösand and the KK Foundation.
- In addition, the Council has been charged by its members and in conjunction with them to:

- Take responsibility for monitoring popular adult education policy and the provision of information.
- Co-ordinate the international contacts of popular adult education.
- Take responsibility for the central provision of information on the range of courses provided by the folk high schools via the Folk High Schools' Information service.

Finally, popular adult education is evaluated by the State, the last occasion being in 1996.

3.5 Other players in the area of adult education

In-service training is regulated in Sweden both by legislation and agreements between labour market partners. In the 1970s and the 1980s a number of laws were introduced which gave employees the right to leave of absence from work for studies and to participate in education during paid working hours. In-service training in Sweden has wide coverage. During the course of a year nearly half of all employees take part in some form of in-service training. Education per employee is relatively short amounting on average to between 5 and 7 days per year.

As a result of legislation on *commissioned education*², (SFS 186:65 and SFS 1992:65) in the middle of the 1980s, the upper secondary school, municipal adult education and higher education were able to provide educational programmes paid for entirely by companies and authorities. This applies to both municipalities, county councils, folk high schools and adult education associations.

A large part of in-service training and competence development in working life has in recent years been partially financed by *EU Structural Funds*. *Objective 4* had up to 1999 disbursed SEK 5 billion, of which a quarter has been financed from the European Social Fund, a quarter from the Swedish state and half from the employers involved. Virtually a quarter of a million employees in approximately 30,000 companies are estimated to have received competence development training within the framework of Objective 4. Education measures can also be financed under other Structural Fund Objectives. This has also contributed to the rapid expansion of private education companies.

At the regional level, pilot projects are underway on new forms of co-operation aimed at creating growth. The foundation is provided by a partnership between the region's industry and players within the public sector. Under the Growth Agreement action plans are drawn up for stimulating growth in a region, where the partners work in a joint programme and take an active part in its implementation.

Regional competence councils have also been created in connection with the growth agreement. Their task is to function as new forum for co-operation between the labour market and educational system e.g. to quickly identify areas where there is a risk of a shortage of labour and take action to adjust the supply of education.

The *trade union organisations* can also be regarded as players on this market. They arrange regular education and in-service training for their officials and representatives, but also provide substantial general education in e.g. social studies, law and/or economics. Often this education is arranged in conjunction with folk high schools or adult education associations.

Other forms of adult education are those carried out by the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, often in conjunction with adult education associations or the labour market partners. The

2. According to this legislation, publicly funded education was able to provide commissioned education paid for entirely by the procurer.

Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company is an independent public service company broadcasting popular adult and adult education programmes via channels on Sveriges Radio and Sveriges Television. These programmes should strengthen, broaden and supplement other educational measures.

To provide employees with greater security in connection with changes in their employment, there is the Job Security Council (for the private market) and the Job Security Foundation (for state employees). The main task of these organisations is in the event of a shortage of labour to draw up appropriate measures, e.g. education to enable employees to be able to obtain new jobs.

3.6 Summary and analysis

A large part of the Swedish population takes part in some form of adult education each year. There are a large number of organisers in adult education. These different education organisers have different profiles and have specialised in different areas, but there is also a broad sector covering general subjects, e.g. language learning where they compete with each other. In principle, they can provide education which the municipalities procure under the framework of the Adult Education Initiative.

Adult education has always had a compensatory task. It has been important to provide adults with opportunities to acquire the education which they didn't receive in their youth and which is available today in the regular school system. Though an important objective in adult education in this respect has been to overcome educational divisions in society, adult education has not been entirely successful in attaining this ambitious goal. New educational opportunities have been provided and the initial benefactors of this system are people with relatively high levels of education who wish to improve their education still further and thus increase their competitiveness. In principle, this applies to all adult education organisers. Also, in the Adult Education Initiative during the early years, there have been difficulties in recruiting and encouraging those with the lowest levels of education to participate -- especially men.

Since the end of the 1980s, competence development in working life has increased very substantially in Sweden.

An important question for adult learning in the future is the financing of different forms of adult education and the division of responsibility between the state, municipality, employers and private individuals. An important issue is to determine whether to move to a system where adult education is geared towards priority groups and areas through goals and legislation, or whether some form of financial incentive is needed. Large state initiatives taken in adult education during the 90s have strongly influenced mainstream focus on adult education as a policy area in society and have led to a large increase in the number of education organisers.

The fact that education has focused on individual needs has led to diversity – with regard to methods of learning and organisers of education – which in turn has contributed to greater competition and co-ordination between organisers.

4 CURRENT INITIATIVES AND OVERVIEW

4.1 Policy and current trends

Lifelong learning presupposes flexible education routes, individual awareness of the opportunities that exist and the individual demands to be taken into consideration on different forms of education. A well-developed infrastructure for adult learning is thus needed. This means creating solutions which take the individual as their starting point. An important precondition for lifelong learning is that adult education functions effectively. This implies the existence of a variety of public and private players.

Validation is one means of using and recognising the formal and informal knowledge an individual has acquired. This competence covers not only knowledge acquired through formal education, but also that arising from informal learning. To meet these needs a system is required which will enable adults to realise the potential of the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

Flexible learning presupposes that the individual is fully aware of what he wishes to achieve. Making it easier for the individual to make enlightened choices requires well-developed guidance and counselling. Everyone - irrespective of age, sex, functional impediments, ethnic, social and geographical origins - should be given equivalent support. Guidance and counselling can make a contribution to the individual's growth and development by helping to reduce the incidence of misguided choices which can be costly for both society and the individual. It is of great importance for adults with low levels of education and possibly disappointments from earlier studies. Guidance is a process for building up self-confidence and helping students to enable them to make well-grounded choices.

A large number of immigrants apply for adult studies at different levels. Adults with insufficient knowledge of Swedish require guidance and counselling which takes account of the need to develop their language skills and knowledge gained from their respective cultural attitudes and values. A number of measures to improve Swedish tuition for immigrants is currently under review.

New technologies create new opportunities for adult education. By means of ICT, adult education can be revitalised and broadened. ICT as a tool in adult education empowers many who would not otherwise have the opportunity to become familiar with and effectively use the new technology. ICT also provides opportunities to reach people who for different reasons have not had access to it.

To be able to provide support for competence development, it is also necessary to develop "state-of-the-art" education in different vocational sectors. For this reason the pilot project on advanced vocational education and other forms of education at post secondary level should be reviewed in order to co-ordinate and create a permanent system at this level.

4.2 Measures for improving opportunities for adult learning

To enhance opportunities for adult learning, the Government has decided on a number of measures, most of which are currently being implemented.

4.2.1 The Adult Education Initiative

When Sweden was in the throes of a deep recession at the beginning of the 1990s, the decision was made to use the regular education system, as well as labour market training and other labour market

policy measures, as a step in the fight against high unemployment. Between 1992 and 1997, the municipalities and popular adult education established *special education places for the unemployed* in municipalities. Usually full-time and one year in duration, the contents were often of a general competence promoting character with special emphasis on languages, natural sciences and technology. Also vocationally oriented education and supplementary education could be arranged with the help of the special state grant. The number has been increasing each year and in 1996/97 reached 50,000 places. Financing assistance for participants benefited from existing study support mechanisms such as SVUX, SVUXA and study allowances. The organisation of these programmes was relatively traditional and the majority of participants had earlier received some form of upper secondary education.

In autumn 1995, the Commission on the Adult Education Initiative (KLK) was appointed with the dual task of proposing goals for promoting a nation-wide programme for boosting adult knowledge and proposing a strategy for lifelong learning. The Government later gave the Commission supplementary directives to monitor the development of the Adult Education Initiative and to take responsibility for the implementation of an independent national evaluation.

A five-year programme in adult education, the Adult Education Initiative, was launched on 1st July 1997. The main responsibility for implementing this lay with the municipalities who would allocate funds for approximately 90,000 places annually. The folk high schools were allocated 10,000 study places by the Swedish National Council of Adult Education. The Adult Education Initiative is the largest programme ever to be run in Sweden in the area of adult education. All municipalities are participating in the project and during the five years of the Adult Education initiative approximately 500,000 persons are expected to participate with a cost of approximately SEK 15-20 billion. In addition, there is the cost of study support to participants, amounting to SEK 25-30 billion. During its first year, the Initiative was led by a special delegation at the Ministry of Education and Science. The National Agency for Education took responsibility for allocating places and monitoring the development of the Adult Education Initiative on July 1st 1998.

Amongst other things, the Adult Education has the following overall goals:

- Reduction in unemployment,
- the development and renewal of adult education,
- reduction in educational gaps,
- raise educational levels.

The education should consistently be based on the individual's needs, conditions and wishes and thus be driven by the individual's demands. Each individual should be able to find an individual solution for his/her learning. The intention is also that the individual's position on the labour market be strengthened prior to the commencement of studies. At the same time as the Adult Education Initiative was started new and more advantageous study support was introduced, namely the special education grant, UBS.

The Adult Education Initiative is a joint task for the state and the municipalities. A special state grant is available and each year municipalities apply for funds for the volume of education they plan to provide. The application also states the qualitative measures they wish to implement. For these they receive a special quality grant. The state grant is given as a lump sum to the municipality. State grants permit municipalities to attain goals concerning the orientation, scope and quality of the education specified in their application.

Municipalities have the overall responsibility for organisation, planning and implementation. They can choose how to use the state grants, and they can choose between arranging education themselves

or subcontracting to other organisers. Municipalities may also choose to co-operate with other municipalities. The syllabi and grade criteria, the ordinance on municipal adult education, as well as the rest of the regulatory framework for upper secondary adult education applies to all education except that provided by folk high schools.

Evaluation and results

A comprehensive evaluation of adult education is currently under way, in particular, the Adult Education Initiative. Results presented so far show that the Adult Education Initiative has been very successful. Over 100,000 persons have participated in different forms of adult education on an annual basis. The vast majority – more than 80% – are also satisfied or very satisfied with the education they have received (Lander R. and Larsoon M., 2000).

Amongst other things, the Adult Education Initiative has attempted to increase participation in adult education. To achieve this, it has analysed and attempted to eliminate barriers that exist to participation. A new form of co-operation has also emerged, where municipalities often work together with other players such as the national employment office, trade union organisations and companies in order to broaden and increase recruitment.

In most municipalities *orientation courses* have been arranged and efforts made to *strengthen guidance and counselling*. Orientation courses, which are very flexible in their approach, are used to enable prospective participants to find out for themselves in a non-stressing environment what adult studies involve. Participants also receive good access to counselling during the course.

Many municipalities have, in addition to providing more counsellors, also set-up a counselling centre or *infotek*. Here adults can receive different kind of help and support such as:

- Individual guidance,
- participation in orientation courses,
- opportunity to set up individual study plans,
- evaluation of earlier knowledge.

An important part of the Adult Education Initiative has been to provide a range of alternatives based on adults' needs and interests. This means that municipalities who are the principal organisers for implementing the programme, subcontract organisers other than their own municipal adult organisation, e.g. folk high schools, adult education associations and private organisers, more than before. These organisers can work in different ways. Sometimes it is quite possible for an adult in an education programme to receive different modules from one organiser whilst others may be provided by another organiser, in this way they are able to combine the best that is available from different organisers.

Another objective has been to provide as many *flexible study options* as possible. Municipalities now offer a variety of education programmes containing the following study options:

- Daytime/evenings and during weekends,
- during summer and traditional holidays,
- many different options for starting courses,
- distance studies,
- flexible learning (different rates of studying, guidance).

Many municipalities have either built up or are in process of building up *study centres* providing options such as those mentioned above. Sometimes these centres co-operate with guidance centres.

One ambition was to *expand the proportion of vocationally oriented education* in upper secondary adult education. Many of the courses arranged under the Adult Education Initiative have been vocationally oriented or have provided a combination of general subjects and vocational subjects.

In Sweden it has long been common that adults can have their earlier knowledge validated in connection with admission to an adult education programme. Adults who have been able to receive credit for their earlier knowledge may be admitted to a more rapid course or enter at a higher level. In connection with the Adult Education Initiative, validation has been given greater prominence. Since the start of the Adult Education Initiative a large number of municipalities have developed opportunities for adults to have their knowledge and skills validated. Evaluation of the Adult Education Initiative has been initiated by number of different players who are involved in the programme. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is initiating evaluation of that part of the Adult Education Initiative which popular adult education is responsible for. The National Agency for Education is responsible for municipalities and the National Schools for Adults, in co-operation with the National Agency for Education and the National Labour Market Board, is responsible for measures taken by the labour market authorities. In addition, the municipalities taking part in the programme are responsible for evaluating their respective activities under the Adult Education Initiative.

The Commission on the Adult Education Initiative has been given the task by the Government of co-ordinating the national evaluation of the Adult Education Initiative as well as responsibility for developing independent national evaluations of the initiative. The evaluation provides an overall perspective of the Initiative's planning, implementation and results. Implementation of the Adult Education Initiative has been described in detail in two comprehensive interim reports issued by KLK.

Comprehensive evaluation work is underway on both pedagogical and economic aspects, and interim reports will be submitted until up to the year 2002. Some of the observations from different evaluations are presented below.

Two evaluation projects on the municipalities' role and the individual developments under the initiative reveal the following:

- Results from the studies of the municipalities' implementation of the Adult Education Initiative show that municipalities have chosen different organisational forms for implementing the Adult Education Initiative. Special emphasis has been attached to the relation between the Adult Education Initiative and the local employment office. The results show that employment offices in different municipalities have different views on what kind of education the Adult Education Initiative should focus on and how the education should be related to the labour market training provided by the local employment offices. (Wass, 1999)
- Results from the study on *individual development under the Adult Education Initiative* show that the majority of the students (stated in autumn 1997) were very motivated to start studying under the initiative. Around 60% were “very eager” to begin and a further 20% were “quite eager” to begin studying. Those studying in programmes organised by the municipality were in the beginning more motivated than those studying at a folk high school. In addition, the overwhelming majority of those studying (80%) were “very satisfied” (approximately 40%) or “quite satisfied” with the education they received under the Adult Education Initiative (Lander R. and Larsoon M., 2000).

Two other studies show the following (Göteborgs universitet, 1999 and 2000):

- The Adult Education Initiative in particular attracts those who have not always succeeded so well earlier in life and school, but who now feel a strong desire to start studying. They have also developed greater confidence in their own ability to succeed in their studies.
- Participants often come from the health care area and are usually women. The Adult Education Initiative has not been so successful in recruiting from amongst the long-term unemployed.
- Participants are satisfied with their studies and the benefits they derive from them. Particularly satisfied are those who can start a "study career" and have an option to continue their studies after a year. Least satisfied are those who go back to being unemployed after studying.

A comparison over the period 1997-1998 analysed the differences between municipalities concerning the scope of the Adult Education Initiative. From the report it appears that the proportion of the population participating in the Adult Education Initiative varies greatly between municipalities. There are no obvious explanations for these variations. One evaluation project focusing on *socio-economic* aspects has shown the following (Inregia AB, 2000):

- Unemployment in municipalities only explains a small part of the differences.
- The proportion of immigrants amongst the unemployed does not influence participation in the Adult Education Initiative.

The Swedish Agency for Administrative Development has analysed the *model for implementing the Adult Education Initiative* chosen by the Government. Prior to the launch of the Adult Education Initiative a "Delegation for the Adult Education Initiative" was set up in the Government Office with representatives from the Ministries of Education, Labour Market, Finance, Industry and Trade as well as the Ministry of Public Administration and a secretariat was attached to the delegation. The Secretariat was responsible for the dialogue with municipalities during the planning of the Adult Education Initiative and its implementation during the first year.

According to the report, the Adult Education Initiative has in a short time led to widespread involvement, new thinking and development work on adult education issues. Co-operation between municipalities and other adult education co-ordinators has increased. Co-operation with the employment office and the trade union organisations on the whole operates satisfactorily. Co-operation with local industry, however, has not been so successful.

The National Agency for Education has published a report to assess the changes in *educational levels after the Adult Education Initiative* over the period 1997/98³. From this study the following emerges:

- Of the 308,000 students in municipal adult education, 186,000 had an educational level lower than three years of upper secondary schooling before their studies. Approximately 61,500 persons are thought to have raised their educational level during studies which corresponds to approximately 20% of all students.

3. On educational levels before and after studies in municipal adult education and under the Adult Education Initiative.

- Of those with one year of upper secondary schooling, 50% raised their education by at least one level, and the same applies to approximately 33% of those with compulsory and two years of upper secondary schooling.
- The study shows that lifelong learning is a reality with the oldest person to have raised his educational level being 78 years old. Nearly 2,000 of those who increased their level are 50 years old or more.

International evaluation of the Adult Education Initiative

To get a broader and international perspective on Swedish reforms in adult education and lifelong learning, the Commission on the Adult Education Initiative invited three prominent researchers and experts to study developments in Sweden and submit their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the Swedish system for adult learning and education. The researchers were commissioned by the Commission on the Adult Education Initiative to examine adult education -- especially the Adult Education Initiative -- in three municipalities. They also interviewed a number of politicians, including members of the Riksdag's education committee and a large number of civil servants at the central level of the Government office, the central authorities as well as the trade unions.

On the basis of their observations and interviews, they wrote a report (SOU 1999:141) that provides a historical perspective of Swedish adult education and international views and comparisons. Among the conclusions of the report emerge the following:

- There has been a *shift from education to learning* and competence is something more than just purely formal competence. Learning takes place not only in formal education but also in everyday life and on the job.
- *A strategy for lifelong learning*, covering competence development in working life and learning in everyday life is lacking. There is also lack of *a strategy for validating knowledge*.
- The Adult Education Initiative has been *a success in quantitative terms*, but systematic evaluation of quality is missing. No clear indicators or criteria for assessing quality have been developed.
- The *specially assigned state grant* to the municipalities has made a substantial contribution to the success enjoyed of the Adult Education Initiative. It has also enabled adult education to be rapidly expanded.

4.2.2 *Advanced vocational education*

Professional life demands, to an increasing extent, education that integrates theory and practice . Apart from purely vocational knowledge, the current work milieu also requires other qualifications such as the ability to co-operate, to communicate and to solve problems. Within many vocational areas, there is a great need for a highly skilled work force. From the labour market perspective, there is a desire for strong links between education programmes and the work environment.

Sweden has a wide supply of education at the post upper secondary level: supplementary education in municipal adult education, certain forms of labour market training, technical vocational university colleges and complementary education as well as some education in folk high schools. This sector is growing and becoming increasingly important for the development of companies. The system is, however, split among many different organisers and different regulatory systems. There are also great

variations in the links to the labour market. The pilot project on advanced vocational education (KY) originated as a result of the work of a commission whose purpose was to examine the need for skilled manpower in industry. The goal is to test new forms of post upper secondary vocational education, new pedagogical approaches and new educational organisers.

The target group for such education includes both those who enter directly from upper secondary school and those who are already professionally active and wish to develop their competence within a specific area. Those studying in advanced vocational education are entitled to study support in the form of study allowances. The pilot project KY started on the 1st July 1996 will continue until 2002, when a new system for post upper secondary vocational education is expected to be established.

Advanced vocational education is carried out under the management of the Commission on Advanced Vocational Education, also responsible for its evaluation. Different providers, e.g. the municipalities, private companies and popular adult education can apply to start offering advanced vocational education. It can be carried out within all vocational areas, but should satisfy the specific needs of the labour market. Management of the education takes place locally through a special management group, where representatives from the labour market form a majority. In this group there should be a representative from the municipalities, a university college or a university. The application should, amongst other things, contain a complete education plan, information on the participation of social and institutional partners in a particular education system, competence of teachers, composition of the management group and pedagogical approaches.

Education takes place for a period between one and two years. Completion of a two-year education corresponds to a diploma in advanced vocational education. Some sections can be applied towards credits for further studies in higher education.

Education should contain both theory and on the job training in accordance with the demands for knowledge and skills required in the labour market. At least a third of the education should take place in the form of on the job training. This part is financed by companies. This puts high demands on good supervision and close co-operation between teachers and supervisors in companies. Apart from vocational knowledge, some specific areas are given emphasis:

- Mathematics and natural science subjects,
- computer technology and its applications,
- economics,
- social and cultural knowledge,
- language and communication.

These specific areas of knowledge can be obtained from upper secondary level, supplementary education or from higher education.

The Commission on Advanced Vocational Education is responsible for centralised supervision and follow-up of the education. At the end of 1999, the Commission presented its final report and at the same time presented an independent evaluation of the pilot project carried out by Luleå University College.

A project group has been appointed in the Ministry of Education and Science with the task of:

- Examining the interface between regular post upper secondary vocational education and labour market training.
- Examining the relationship with higher education and opportunities for the individual to progress further within the educational system.
- Analyse how post upper secondary vocational education can be incorporated into the educational system.
- Assess and submit proposals on how to structure the capacity and organisation of a post upper secondary vocational education system.

A more detailed proposal will be submitted to the Government at the beginning of spring 2000. The project group is working on analysing different organisational models for post upper secondary vocational education.

Evaluation and results

A key issue is what types of education have been generated by the pilot project and whether these correspond to the demands of today's labour market. The relationship to the demands of the labour market can be looked at from two perspectives.

The first is whether the total supply of education is aligned with the structural changes taking place in the labour market. The second aspect is whether the individual programmes make up a coherent whole. The first aspect essentially deals with an evaluation of the Commission's ability to make relevant priorities and the overview which is needed to prioritise resources that correspond to the demands of the labour market.

Allocation of places should focus on vocational areas where there is a clear shortage of labour. This means that educational programmes in ICT and technology should be given priority as should further education within the health care sector.

The results of the evaluation are as follows:

- Four vocational areas - manufacturing 22%, ICT 24%, finance 15% and tourism 11% - account for nearly 75% of all education. Manufacturing and ICT, both given priority by the Government, account for nearly half of all education places, whilst health care, which is also a priority area, only accounts for 3% of education places.
- Approximately 80% of education can be described as *vocational education*, while the others are so broad that they can be described as industrial education.
- One ambition of the pilot project is to direct it towards *new activities*. According to the evaluation, most forms of education, approximately two-thirds, are directed towards established activities, whilst approximately a third is directed towards new activities, especially in the areas of environment, information technology and finance.
- A large part of the education in established industries is directed towards remedying the *shortage of vocational skills*. The main part is linked to industries where it is thought that there will be a shortage of expertise with unique competencies.
- Some programmes focusing on *small business development* occur in approximately 12% of all education programmes.

One important result from the pilot project is what happens to advanced vocational students after their education and how in retrospect they assess its value. The researchers have followed up the first students six months after completing their studies: 75% are employed, 7% are studying in higher education, 4% are working in their own companies and 4% are looking for employment. Of those who have secured employment or are working in their own company, 84% are active in the vocational area covered by the programme.

The majority, or 79% of the students are satisfied with their advanced vocational education and 76% consider the contents correspond to what they needed.

The most frequent education method used can be described as problem based learning (PBL). Using this method, students get the opportunity to obtain their skills in solving problems based on realistic situations, often obtained from the very companies where they do their workplace training module.

"Learning at Work" (LIA) is often carried out in project form where students work in a project which is related to the LIA company or as a practice module where the students can learn to apply their theoretical knowledge in real life. Often students are able to begin by trying different jobs so that over time they are able to function as a normal employee. In such cases Learning at Work has a trainee character, which can strengthen students' future employability.

Advanced vocational education has to a certain extent, succeeded in recruiting other groups of students than those with higher education.

- The evaluation shows that social segregation is significantly less in advanced vocational education, but still follows the typical patterns of higher education. Students with a blue collar background are still highly under-represented, whilst those with a white-collar background are over-represented.
- Amongst KY students, the proportion whose parents are running their own business is as high as 14% compared to 9% in higher education and 6% of the employed population.
- Concerning recruitment of students with an immigrant background, KY education has succeeded better than regular higher education.

4.2.3 Commission on individual competence development accounts

The high rate of change in the economy and the labour market put demands on continuing competence development. Today, competence development is provided mainly to develop the knowledge and experience of employees or to improve the position of the individual on the labour market. The interest and willingness of the individual to take part in lifelong learning presupposes that it is financially and practically feasible to combine employment and education.

It is vital to stimulate development in ways which would increase interest in individual competence development. The Government set aside special funds in the budget bill for year 2000 to stimulate individual competence development on an ongoing basis.

The Commission presented its final report in December 2000 and will submit proposals on how the system for individual competence accounts should be designed.

4.2.4 Commission on guidance and counselling in schooling

The Commission on guidance and counselling covers the complete school system, including adult education. The Commissioner should consider the needs of different groups of students and be particularly observant as to how vulnerable individuals and groups have access to counselling and guidance. The division of responsibility between the individual, the municipality and the state should be examined and clarified.

There are a number of factors which are changing the role of vocational guidance and counselling officers:

- Increased internationalisation,
- use of ICT,
- development of validation and evaluation of foreign vocational competence,
- co-operation between different players,
- increasing tendency for adults to change profession, and
- recurring education.

The Commission has the task of mapping and analysing individual needs for counselling in the school system. It should propose goals for study and vocational counselling based on changing demands in the labour market, education and developments in society. The study will also, against this background, submit proposals concerning the education of guidance officers as well as competence development of those already active in the profession. Together with other players, the Commission will discuss the conditions for developing a common information system.

4.2.5 Commission on validation

A very important precondition for adult learning is that knowledge and skills acquired in different environments can be evaluated and compared. In Sweden, as mentioned earlier, the issue of validating knowledge and skills acquired in and outside the education system has been a priority in recent years. In a number of municipalities, different methods have been used to assess and evaluate the knowledge adults have acquired in different educational situations, in the labour market or in and in other ways.

For a long time, the evaluation and recognition of foreign education has been the subject of various activities at the central level. The National Agency for Higher Education assesses foreign education in connection with admissions to most programmes at universities and university colleges. The National Agency for Higher Education assesses foreign education for suitability for professional practice in Sweden. Education qualifications and programmes for entry to regulated professions are assessed by the authority responsible in that sector.

On the other hand, there is no authority with overall responsibility for evaluating foreign education at upper secondary level in order to facilitate entry to the labour market for persons with such education. Projects assessing the vocational competence of immigrants at the upper secondary level have been carried out by the Swedish National Labour Market Administration, but the results have not come up to expectations. One of the reasons has been that there has not been widespread acceptance by employers of the certification.

The Government will now investigate whether a national system for validation is needed. At the beginning of year 2000, three pilot projects were started in different parts of the country. Initially these focused on the validation of foreign vocational competence at the upper secondary level. Immigrants, as mentioned above, are an important target group especially when there is a shortage of labour and many immigrants are outside the labour market. Validation can thus be one means of identifying the vocational competence of immigrants and thus facilitate their entry into the labour market.

The Commissioner will submit proposals to the Government on how developed models and methods should be applied for validating vocational competence which cannot be assessed within the framework of municipal adult education. It will also map the need for and assess appropriate forms for validating knowledge in Swedish that reflect the demands of the labour market by, for instance, a national language test.

The validation which has taken place and is currently taking place within the framework of the Adult Education Initiative is mainly directed to competence corresponding to the upper secondary level. The Commission will also assess validation of related levels, e.g. those corresponding to advanced vocational education. In addition, the Commission will also assess the need for a national system for validating adult knowledge and competence. The Commission is scheduled to finalise its work by the end of year 2000.

4.2.6 *New system for study support*

A reform of the study support system will enter into force 1st July 2001. The new system is more generous and simpler than before and is thus expected to lead to greater recruitment of students from a number of different groups in society and thereby contribute to expanded participation in education. The reform will increase the grant proportion and as a result lead to a reduction in loan levels. The reform will also have a new system with a shorter repayment period. In addition, there will be an increase in the "free" amount, i.e. the income a student may earn without any reduction in study funds. By raising this "free" amount, more students will be able to raise the level of their disposable income without any negative impact on funds available for studying. In addition, study allowances will also contribute to pensions.

The total amount of study loans and study grants will be equal for all students and linked to the price index. The level will be the same as the current study allowances. Study allowances will be available for both full and part-time studies. Those who are studying half time will receive half the study allowance.

The system will contain two levels of grants, a general level and a higher level for groups given special priority. The higher grant is intended in the first instance for persons aged 25 or above and who are studying at compulsory or upper secondary level. The grant will amount to 82% of the total amount.

Students aged 25 years and above, irrespective of their level of education, will under certain conditions be able to obtain a supplementary loan. The supplementary loan will be available for full-time students for a maximum of 120 weeks (three years). It will also be possible to obtain a supplementary loan for certain essential additional costs.

Study allowance should be calculated for each week the student spends in education. An academic year corresponds to 40 weeks of full-time studies.

Table 3. Periods of study allowances by education level

Education level	Maximum grant period (in no. of weeks of full-time studies)
Education at higher education level	Study allowances are available for a maximum of 240 weeks (6 years).
Education at upper secondary level	Study allowances are available for a maximum of 120 weeks (3 years). Students who already have a three-year upper secondary education or equivalent may obtain a study allowance for a maximum of 80 weeks.
Education at compulsory level	Students who have not completed compulsory school or equivalent education will be able to receive study funds for such studies for a maximum of 80 weeks (2 years). The period can be extended by a further 20 weeks for those who need preparatory training in reading, writing and arithmetic. Students who have already completed compulsory or equivalent education may obtain study allowance for a maximum of 40 weeks (1 year).

Note: In principle, study allowance can be applied for at any time during the year.

Study grants are available to applicants up to the year in which they become 50. Study loans can be obtained up to the calendar year an applicant becomes 50. The right to study loans will be progressively limited from the calendar year in which a student becomes 41.

Repayment of study loans should under normal conditions take place over a maximum of 25 years or until the borrower reaches the age of 60. Smaller loans should be repaid over a shorter period. For those aged 60 years and above who have not completed their repayment, the period will be extended at a maximum until the year in which the borrower becomes 67. Loans outstanding at that age or in the event of death are written off. Loans granted for competence enhancing studies at the compulsory and/or upper secondary level can also in certain cases be written off. This annuity like system means that each year's amount is adjusted upwards by a certain percentage at an unchanged rate of interest.

To complete repayment in accordance with a predetermined time schedule can be burdensome for borrowers with comparatively low incomes. It is thus necessary that there are guarantee rules in the system enabling borrowers to reduce their annual repayments commensurate with their repayment capacity.

4.2.7 Development work of the National Agency for Education

The National Agency for Education has in recent years intensified its work on adult education. Amongst other things, this has resulted in a development plan drawn up during 1998. Over the last few years, the following measures have been given priority by the National Agency for Education:

- Work of municipalities on recruitment and prioritisation of target groups,
- development of individual study plans,
- compilation and dissemination of models and methods for validation,

- studies into the development of knowledge areas,
- establishment of networks between different educational providers.

The National Agency for Education has the task of "analysing the need for changes in steering documents such as the curriculum, programme goals, syllabi, national tests, etc. and whether these need to be adjusted to the special situations applicable to adult education".

The transfer of the Adult Education Initiative to the National Agency for Education in summer 1998 also included responsibility for developing the initiative. The National agency for Education has established a central organisation with responsibility for the Adult Education Initiative.

4.2.8 *ICT in flexible learning*

By means of an amendment to tax legislation, in 1997 the Government made it possible for employers to offer their employees computers on highly advantageous conditions. Between 600,000 and 700,000 Swedes have taken advantage of the opportunity of paying a couple of hundred Krona a month to get access to a modern, powerful computer at home.

At the same time the Government and the Swedish Riksdag decided on launching an initiative for ICT in the school, *ITiS*, which aims at providing in-service training for 60,000 teachers in the regular school by stimulating the use of ICT as a learning tool. Over a three year period (1999-2001), SEK 1.5 billion will be invested in competence development for close to half of all teachers. The focus is on developing working approaches and organisations using ICT to provide powerful leverage. Teachers in adult education are not yet directly affected by the initiative but they will be in 2001, and since many of these teachers are also working in youth schooling, they will also be able to benefit.

As in youth schooling, more advanced use of the new technology can contribute to the development of working approaches for adult education. This relates to promoting the development of inter-disciplinary, problem oriented, pupil centred ways of working in teams of teachers.

In addition, ICT make it possible to provide highly individualised learning tailored to their particular needs.

4.2.9 *ICT for distance learning*

ICT creates opportunities for developing distance learning. Until now coverage has been relatively modest in Sweden. Popular adult education's extensive coverage over the whole country and the expansion of adult education in all municipalities throughout the country has limited the need for distance learning. Two National Schools for Adults have provided municipal adult education through distance learning. A privately run correspondence institute, Hermods, which had a wide range of activities has, however, experienced a decline since the beginning of the 1970s.

In a number of municipalities, work is in progress on using distance mediating technologies to provide inhabitants, not only in their own municipalities but also in others, with more flexible forms of education in time and place as a complement to the traditional supply of municipally provided courses. A number of municipalities are developing distance courses quite independently of each other using ICT at the upper secondary level. Universities and university colleges are co-operating in different consortia over the development of higher education courses to be provided through ICT.

In connection with this, a large number of *municipal study centres* have been built around the country. At these centres, participants in both adult education and higher education have full access to modern technology and in some cases to supervised instruction.

To contribute to this development of research in distance learning in higher education and popular adult education, a special agency for distance learning was set up on 1st July 1999 (DISTUM), located in Härnösand in central Sweden. DISTUM will promote research and development of distance learning in popular adult education and higher education.

At present there is a special working group, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Science in connection with the Adult Education Initiative, which is working on the development of web based courses for the two schools, "Statens skolor för vuxna" (National schools for adults).

4.2.10 Adult pedagogy

The Commission on the Adult Education Initiative in 1997 mapped *research into adult pedagogy* which had been carried out over the last two decades. The mapping presents research results not only from adult pedagogical education and supplementary education, but also research results from 1980 and onwards concerning municipal adult education, popular adult education, higher education and the labour market. The following can be stated:

- Research into adult pedagogy compared with other school research is neglected.
- Only 3% of all PhD focused on adult learning pedagogy between 1990 and 1995 (municipal adult education and popular adult education).
- From 1980 approximately 700 titles have been produced, of which 86 are directly related to popular adult education and 70 to municipal adult education (including earlier basic adult education and municipal adult education for the unemployed). In higher education around 150 titles have been produced, and about 200 titles within the area of "Adult Pedagogy in Working Life".

Results show that general *education in adult pedagogy* rarely occurs in teacher training programmes. The majority of teachers working in municipal and state adult education, labour market training and amongst private education providers have qualifications for teaching in the regular youth schools. The University of Linköping alone carries a one-year practical and pedagogical programme for teaching adult education in folk high schools and adult education associations.

There are also a number of further programmes varying between four weeks and a term (20 weeks). Amongst others, supplementary education at the University of Linköping for basic adult education covers a single term. The Nordic Folk Academy in Göteborg provides a supplementary course in adult pedagogy of a term, but runs over a longer period.

Adult pedagogy is covered in a number of teaching programmes and as special courses at a number of universities. Comprehensive *in-service training* of teachers and leaders in adult education is run at university colleges and universities, folk high schools, adult education associations, etc. as well as organisations, usually in conjunction with other adult education providers. Some in-service training is also provided from Linköping through the Adult Education Centre for popular adult education and the Centre for school development at the University of Linköping.

Teacher training has recently been the subject of a commission in the 1997 Commission on Teacher Training. The Commission proposes in its final report a new structure for teacher training where adult pedagogy should be included in all teacher training since all teachers need to have an appreciation and understanding of how adults learn.

In addition, the Commission proposes that there should be specialisation concerning teaching of adults, which trainee teachers (who intend to apply for work as teachers in adult education) should have as a part of their teaching qualification for adult learning. This course should also be open to practising teachers. A Bill and parliamentary decision based on the Commission's final report is expected during Spring of 2000.

4.2.11 Evaluation of Popular Adult Education

The State's evaluation of Popular Adult Education (SUFO) forms the basis for the Government's most recent Bill on Popular Adult Education (1997/98:115). To summarise, it can be stated that the evaluation of popular adult education showed that its activities broadly reflect state goals. Study circles and folk high schools are a good means for adults to study, but adult education associations should make greater efforts to recruit more under educated persons, immigrants and unemployed.

The Commission stated that participants are satisfied with the results of their studies, with the activity as a whole and that popular adult education is an important instrument for general education and the overall level of knowledge of adults, as well as for cultural life in Sweden.

Both the adult education associations and folk high schools must be regarded as important in safeguarding democracy and development in Sweden and for the personal development of participants as laid down in state goal documents.

In addition, the following can be stated:

- 75% of Swedes aged 18-75 have taken part in a study circle at some time.
- 14% of Swedes have taken part in more than eight study circles over the last decade and/or at least three study circles in the last three years.
- There is an important value for daily life in the social networks provided by study circles.
- The folk high schools seem to provide a meaningful learning environment.
- As in other forms of education, the adult education associations recruit more participants with good educational backgrounds than with low levels of education. More persons participate in short forms of education in study circles and folk high school courses than in other forms of adult education.
- In the longer folk high school courses, the proportion with low levels of education is particularly large, mainly in general courses providing eligibility for higher education studies, and in the extra educational places provided as a result of labour market policy measures.
- An important group in all adult education are the unemployed, but according to the Commission, these participated in study circles as infrequently as those with low levels of education. Folk high schools on the other hand recruit from amongst the unemployed, both in their regular general courses and in extra educational places.

- Adult education associations should be reviewed, not only as regards their quality and levels of ambition in some handicraft study circles, for example in sewing or woodwork, but in order to ensure that they fulfil both their own goals and those of the state.

4.2.12 Labour market policy initiatives

Conditions for labour market policy are changing

In a report to the Government, AMS describes the need for changes in labour market policy and the National Labour Market Board's activities at the beginning of the next millennium. Over a large part of the 1990s, the main problem was a lack of demand for labour and high unemployment rates. Now the demand for labour is increasing with the rapid rise in employment, mainly in regions with large towns. The large increase in employment is expected to continue during year 2000. If this development continues over the next few years, the Government's goals of achieving 80% employment of the working population will be achieved by the year 2002.

There is already a growing shortage of persons with high levels of education in certain professions requiring higher education. The shortage is greatest in the health care sector, ICT, natural sciences and technology. There is also an increasing need within occupations requiring upper secondary school levels -- including health care, care of the elderly, construction and industrial work.

Demographic changes will have a major impact at the beginning of the 2000s. Major changes in the age composition of the labour force will take place over the next 15-20 years. The average age is increasing rapidly and those leaving the labour market are outnumbering those entering. A central issue is whether the surplus of the labour force can be sufficiently great to sustain long-term growth of the economy.

A large group amongst the unemployed faces major difficulties in obtaining jobs. Structural unemployment has resulted from the difficult conditions on the labour market in the 90s and changes in employer requirements. They have long been classified as looking for work at the national employment office for a number of years without having held regular employment, and during this time have been forced to switch between open unemployment and different labour market measures. Approximately 100,000 persons or more than 2% of the labour force fall into this category. There is a risk that this group will increase at the same rate as change continues, implying that those employed in labour intensive work will decrease and that the knowledge content and competence requirements on the labour market will increase. This group is dominated by:

- Unemployed aged 50 - 64 years,
- persons with reduced work capacity due to functional impediments,
- citizens from outside the Nordic area, mainly groups with low levels of education,
- persons with low levels of education who earlier worked in declining occupations,
- young persons who have not completed school with a passing certificate.

One of the most important labour market policy measures in the immediate future will be to counteract the shortage of labour and bottlenecks through vocationally oriented labour market training in areas where there is a shortage of skilled labour.

AMS proposes that labour market training in the future be divided up into two parts:

- Vocational education to combat shortages and bottlenecks. Education should be vocationally oriented and be based on current demand for labour, both for unemployed and employed. AMS consider that the need for such education at the beginning of the first decade in the new millennium would need to be 30,000 persons on average per month.
- Education within the framework of the "National Employment Office's Labour Force Pool", and for specific prioritised groups, as part of a programme for enabling those looking for work to develop their employability skills. Approximately 10,000 places on the average per month are needed for such education.

The National IT Programme

The IT industry has in recent years expanded rapidly and has contributed to a shortage of skilled manpower. This shortage has led to the design of education or vocational programmes to increase skilled work force in this field.

One example of such vocational training is the *National IT Programme*, SwIT -- a type of labour market training. During spring 1997, the Federation of Swedish Industry drew the attention of the Government to the need for competent, vocationally educated personnel within the ICT area. Despite high unemployment, employers experienced difficulties in finding and employing personnel within this area. In the Budget Bill 1997/98:1, SEK 1,3 billion was thus set aside to finance a national programme for ICT education.

The programme has been in operation between 1998 and March 2000 and approximately 11,000 persons have taken part. Participants are unemployed people who need to change or update their working skills. It has been a political ambition to give priority to three different groups of applicants: women, immigrants and those with work handicaps. The duration of the programme per individual is fixed to 25 weeks on average.

The local project organisation consists of around 50 project leaders throughout the country. Prior to the start of the course, project leaders make a careful market analysis of the region's needs, identify host companies and draw up together with them the education programme. Recruitment of participants takes place together with the employment office and companies, which means that each educational place is in principle assured an employer.

Project leaders are also responsible for the selection process which contains theoretical tests and interviews. The education is relatively short and includes a workplace located component. This requires that companies have a long-term strategy for competence development and learning when they employ a person, so that employees will not run the risk of their skills becoming outdated and exclusion from the labour market.

New pedagogical methods have been used in SwIT education programmes, e.g. IT entrepreneurs where 300 students are taught interactively in 15 different places. Distance learning imposes high demands on motivation and independent work and provides clear financial gains since a teacher can teach many at the same time without any deterioration in quality.

In the interim report which IFAU (The Institute for Labour Market Evaluation) presented to the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, SwIT considers that co-operation with companies is an important prerequisite for the success of the programme. In addition they consider that SWIT is a

conduit for new knowledge to small companies enabling them to find out what opportunities there are for growth through the use of ICT e.g. through education in electronic commerce.

The Vaggeryd Model

Vocationally oriented labour market training is often linked to modular work place training, which varies in length depending on the course. The employment office in Vaggeryd, a small town in the south of Sweden, is expanding the work practice component on a trial basis and allowing participants to rotate amongst different companies.

The employment office identifies needs in companies and together they take responsibility for drawing up an educational plan. The model is based on the needs of the local labour market. Education should be worked out in close collaboration with companies and be completely targeted to the needs of industry. Another scenario is where a number of companies participate in the same overall education plan but provide different input. Education is thus not designed for one particular company.

One obvious advantage is that its content is very specific and closely aligned with the needs of the labour market. Another advantage is that an employer is in a good position to determine employability requirements for a specific position.

A company taking part in the education plan should be able to offer work-related training where participants can undergo a planned training programme during the time spent in the company. When a participant has completed the programme, he/she is then able to proceed to the next company for further training. The participant should have a work practice module in at least two and a maximum of five work places during the training period. By means of rotating, the participant learns that a work task can be carried out in different ways and with different tools.

Most participants belong to the categories of labour that are difficult to place. Despite the high proportion of long-term unemployed and the fact that many participants come from outside the Nordic area, the employment office has achieved some measure of success. The proportion who gain jobs after completing the programme is much higher than in regular vocationally oriented education.

The project "More effective labour market training"

A working group has been appointed within the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications with the task of reviewing labour market training. The group's work was finalised in Spring 2000. The objectives of the working group are:

- To describe and analyse current labour market training from the perspectives of organisation, efficiency, quality and use of resources.
- To clarify the interface between regular education and labour market training.
- To review conditions for improving local joint planning of education in order to avoid duplication and achieve better use of resources.
- To submit proposals on the future orientation of how labour market training will be steered.

Based on this analysis, the work group is to consider whether current labour market training rules require changes on and whether today's organisation needs to be changed to use the resources available more effectively as well as attain the goals set up by the Government and the Swedish Riksdag. The Commission should make an analysis of costs and outcomes in terms of gender distribution in different education orientations, amongst those who achieve work on completion of their training.

Developments of the labour market depends on how well the regular educational system succeeds in satisfying the demand for labour. The starting point is that, as of today, regular education in labour market policy measures will only be given to handicapped persons (with limited work capacities) and immigrants.

With high unemployment during a large part of the 1990s, and increasingly high competence requirements in working life, labour market training and educational policy have become more integrated. This means that regular discussions need to be held on the division of responsibility on those issues which both policy areas have in common. The working group will also investigate the conditions for creating more opportunities for jointly planning education in order to avoid duplication and to achieve better utilisation of resources.

4.3 Future development of adult learning

4.3.1 Final report of Commission for the Adult Education Initiative

In 1995, the Commission for the Adult Education Initiative (KLK) submitted proposals on developing the design and structure of adult education after the Adult Education Initiative. In addition, the Commission has had the task of evaluating the Adult Education Initiative and examining the situation for students with functional impediments. The Commission has presented its proposals for reforming adult education in a report "Building Knowledge". Below follow some of these proposals:

Rights and opportunities of individuals

The state should guarantee individuals access to upper secondary competence and a certain minimum standard for the infrastructure of lifelong learning. The guarantee gives individuals the right to study of up to 2000 upper secondary school points, which means 25 to 30 courses in different subjects on different levels (in principle the volume required for receiving a final certificate from upper secondary school) or the equivalent with pass grades. The state should guarantee this right and the municipalities should be obliged to provide the education either in their own municipality or if unable to do this in a different municipality.

The wishes and needs of the student should be instrumental in determining the education and this right should also encompass all national courses - including vocationally oriented courses at the upper secondary school. It should be possible to start the education within three to six months. Municipalities should also be obliged to provide all those who are interested in studying with ongoing guidance and validation.

Adults with psychological learning disabilities should be guaranteed the right to basic municipal adult education and the right to courses such as the upper secondary level provided for school youth with learning disabilities.

Students in need of special support -- students with functional impediments

Students with functional impediments should have the same opportunities and be guaranteed the same right to education as other adults.

Students in need of special support should be given the right to assistance in drawing up an individual study plan, which makes clear how the need for special study support measures or adjustments should be satisfied.

Access to education - municipal adult education and folk high schools -- Building Knowledge

The Adult Education Initiative is expected to continue after year 2002 with 65,000 annual study places in addition to what is already provided for under its present organisation. Of these places, 55,000 are intended to further strengthen municipal adult education, 50,000 for upper secondary municipal adult education and 5,000 for basic municipal adult education, as well as 10,000 places for the further strengthening of education in folk high schools.

Together with the basic organisation financed by the municipality for municipal adult education of 57,000 annual study places and the folk high school (15,000 annual places), Building Knowledge will provide up to 137,000 annual study places.

The foundation stone of Building Knowledge is the infrastructure in the municipalities, municipal education for adults and the folk high schools. The municipalities will, however, be responsible for ensuring diversity and flexibility in the supply of education and using different educational providers.

Study support

The Commission proposes changes on a number of important points of the new study support system. Studies at the basic level should without exception be financed entirely out of grants.

The Commission also proposes that unemployed students with a minimum daily allowance in terms of unemployment benefit should be offered income related support in the future. It is also proposed that the age limit for eligibility for all state adult study support should be raised from 50 to 55 years.

Infrastructure

By the term "infrastructure for lifelong learning", the Commission refers to information, guidance and counselling, individual study plans, validation, quality assurance of educational providers, competence development for adult educators, flexible learning, co-operation between educational providers, libraries, municipalities, the employment offices and industry, as well as access to infrastructure for ICT based learning.

The minimum standard for municipalities should be stipulated in terms of a chain of supply containing i.a. recruitment activities, study and guidance counselling, individual and detailed study plans, validation, co-operation between different educational providers, state and municipal administration and industry, special support as well as evaluation and quality assurance.

Goals and steering

The Commission proposes common overall goals for publicly provided adult education i.e. popular adult education, municipal education for adults, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities, Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi), National Schools for Adults, advanced vocational education, complementary education and higher education. The goals should be based on a common platform of foundation values for lifelong learning and be aimed at achieving the following:

- Facilitating adults in deepening and developing their knowledge as well as enhancing their skills in co-operating and communicating.
- Developing skills and interest in studying as well as the individual's responsibility for their own studying.
- Stimulate the student's skill in independent and critical examination as well as the ability to solve problems on their own of different kinds.

- Enhance opportunities for the personal development of adults as well as their ability to participate in cultural, social and political life and thereby contribute to the development of the democratic society.
- Facilitate adult acquisition of knowledge needed to manage a variety of work tasks, contribute to change in working life as well as contribute to full employment and thus promote development and progress in society as well as increase Sweden's competitiveness in international terms.
- Contribute to evening out educational gaps between and within generations as well as working for greater equality and social justice.
- By means of a wide supply of individually tailored education options provide adults with the conditions for participating in lifelong learning where recurring education is an increasingly common element.

The Commission also proposes other quantitative and qualitative goals for municipal adult education e.g. that within a ten year period:

- The proportion of citizens with compulsory schooling as their highest educational level be reduced by 10%;
- the proportion of citizens with three year upper secondary education be raised by 5%;
- at least 70% of students should be satisfied with i.a. vocational and guidance counselling, individual study plans, their opportunities to receive validation, the supply of courses as well as the organisation of their studies.

In addition, the Commission also proposes that a new state Promotion Agency be set up which should be concerned with not only evaluating lifelong learning but also developing a quality assurance system for lifelong learning.

Research, development and competence development for adult educators

The Commission proposes that the Government "takes measures to achieve a substantial and immediate initiative in research in the area of adult education and lifelong learning" and that research findings are disseminated via networks or via a number of national resource centres.

The state is responsible for rapidly building up web based courses in the form of a project together with other development work. The national schools for adults and other appropriate players should have a key role in this work.

The Commission proposals will be circulated for official comment. A bill on adult learning is planned for the winter 2000/2001.

5 CHALLENGES AHEAD

During the last 25 years, the fundamental principle of Swedish adult education has been based on four goals: bridging educational gaps, promoting economic growth, strengthening democracy and satisfying the wishes of the individual. Striking a balance between goals that are partially contradictory has not always been easy and solutions implemented have varied over time as shown in the report.

Society is currently undergoing a new phase of rapid development. The labour market and employment have changed radically during the course of the 1990s. International interdependence has increased dramatically. How work is organised in companies today bears little resemblance to industrial society. ICT is changing not only the fabric of our daily reality, but also the daily work content of a large part of the labour force. Demographic changes are creating a situation where increasing numbers of persons with high levels of education are retiring from the labour force. Although this could be elaborated on in much greater detail, these changes serve to illustrate the environment in which the Government will submit its proposals on adult learning this autumn. These proposals will largely determine the framework and conditions that will apply for a number of years ahead into the future.

An obvious question is whether the decisions taken by the Swedish Riksdag over the next few years will provide a framework that will remain for the next 25 years, in the same way the reforms of the 1960s and 1970s continue to provide the foundations for the current system. We do not know the answer to this, but what is reasonably certain is that since the demands imposed today on flexibility and open systems are much higher than those of 25 years ago, it is unlikely that these changes will have the same "staying" power. And such an ambition is unrealistic and in all probability even inappropriate.

Today we can already see that the shift in focus from "adult education" to "adult learning" demonstrates that we have a much broader range of factors to consider than 25 years ago. We have to make a paradigmatic change in our thinking from education steered by supply, a producer-oriented system, aiming at creating opportunities for *recurring education*, to a more general discussion on how we can actually support adults within a framework embodied by the concept of *lifelong learning*.

The notion of recurring education is based on the idea that the individual on a number of occasions during the course of working life alternates work with periods of studies for enhancing competencies. Society should thus supply a broad range of courses, not least to provide adults with opportunities to fulfil the necessary preconditions for advancing to studies in higher education. All the indications are that today's system is largely able to satisfy these needs. As shown in this report a very high proportion of those studying in higher education have either completely or partially acquired eligibility for higher education and/or competitive advantages through municipal adult education (Komvux).

Lifelong learning, however, imposes a different matrix of demands. It is less a question of leaving work to study, and more an issue of integrating work and studying. Probably a significant part of learning will be progressively transferred from the school as such to the workplace. The contents of education will be increasingly defined by the immediate demands of work and less by the syllabi of the regular schooling system. When to study will be determined by the demands of work, and not by the school's traditional division into terms, which is essentially a legacy from agricultural society.

If needs are increasingly to be expressed in terms of "*education-on-demand*", who then should have the responsibility for satisfying these and in what ways? What will be the roles of government, institutions, the individual, and employers?

From this perspective, new technology and the opportunities it provides are of great interest. For the individual, it is probably less important who actually supplies the education when it is delivered over the net. The right focus, the right level and an appropriate pedagogical approach are more important than the physical location of the course provider. What would be the role of the municipalities if such a system were to develop? Will national boundaries lose their importance in an educational market delivered over ICT networks?

Before education and competence development over the net can become genuinely competitive, substantial and costly development work will have to be undertaken. Enthusiasm for the opportunities provided by new technology should not lead to a situation where we accept outmoded computer based teaching models of the 1970s, albeit in the guise of multicolour animated courses distributed over the Internet. If new technology is to be used in a pedagogical context, we will have to make sure we "exploit" the specific pedagogical opportunities inherent in the technology and that its approach to knowledge and learning is consistent with the curricula. Such demands will in any case be imposed by students. A significant problem is that these needs will seldom be satisfied since there is no commercial market for these products. Who will take the responsibility for developing appropriate new products? What role will be played by the Government?

Adult education in Sweden has by tradition played an important role in strengthening democracy and the common foundation values on which it is nurtured. Will there be scope for these foundation values when and if the demands of work increasingly steer our learning?

The current adult education system is also characterised by the fact that it is the relatively well-educated who make greatest use of the education opportunities available. The Matthew principle has been said to influence adult education "*Unto those who have, it shall be given*". Throughout the mid-1970s, major initiatives have been taken to break this pattern. From all that has been mentioned, there is every reason to continue such efforts. What instruments will be available in tomorrow's society? Do the changes touched upon above imply that the advantages enjoyed by the relatively well-educated will increase?

There are no indications that the policy goals of redistribution and growth underlying the policy for supporting adult learning will be changed in the immediate future. It is also difficult to contemplate a scenario where the goal of democracy or of individual self-realisation is abolished. It is, however, not self evident that the resources and structures that have functioned reasonably well over the last 25 years will also function for the next 25 years. As a result of very substantial work, the Government in its forthcoming Bill will be laying the foundations for a gradual adaptation of the framework to the new requirements and opportunities we are facing.

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GLOSSARY

Arbetsmarknadsutbildning	Labour market training
Eftergymnasial yrkesutbildning	Post upper secondary vocational education
Folkbildning	Popular adult education
Folkhögskola	Folk high school
Folkhögskolekurs	Folk high school course
Försöksverksamhet med kvalificerad yrkesutbildning (KY)	Pilot project on advanced vocational education (KY)
Grundläggande vuxenutbildning	Basic adult education
Gymnasial vuxenutbildning	Upper secondary adult education
Högskola	Higher education
Kommunal vuxenutbildning (Komvux)	Municipal adult education (Komvux)
Kompletterande utbildning	Complementary education
Offentliga skolväsendet för vuxna	Public education system for adults
Orienteringskurs	Orientation course
Personalutbildning	In-service training
Påbyggnadsutbildning	Supplementary education
Statens skolor för vuxna, SSV	National schools for adults
Studiecirkel	Study circle
Studieförbund	Adult education association
Svenska för invandrare (sfi)	Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi)
Universitet	University
Uppdragsutbildning	Commissioned education
Vuxenutbildning för utvecklingsstörda (Särvux)	Municipal adult education for those with learning disabilities