Policy Performance and Evaluation: Sweden

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i) to ‘advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and their transition to economic and social independence’, and

ii) to engage with ‘relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe.’ Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website www.style-research.eu, or by following us on twitter @STYLEEU.

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Executive Summary

- The Swedish youth policy is handled mainly by the state and the municipalities. The state is in charge of the legal regulation but also of a number of state authorities and by those also much of the labour market policy programmes and tertiary education. The municipalities are responsible for education at the primary and secondary levels. Up to the end of 2007 municipalities also were responsible for unemployed youth under the age of 25. That changed with the introduction of the Youth Job Programme in December 2007 that is managed by the Swedish Public Employment Service. Still, it is rather common that municipalities provide own labour market policies for young unemployed, especially those under the age of 20, where municipalities have an obligation to help (“informations- och uppföljningsansvar”). The state and the municipalities are to an increasing extent buying services from private companies.

- The primary school is comprehensive and lasts for nine years. The general school starting age is seven but there is a pre-school year for those aged sex. The tertiary education is divided in three cycles. Most universities are financed and run by the state. There are no fees in the Swedish school system besides for students in tertiary education coming from countries outside EU/EES and Switzerland.

- Sweden has no minimum wage legislation but there are minimum wages clauses in the collective agreements. Since the mid-1970s, there have been laws regulating the labour market. The most important one is The Law on Job Security (LAS). It means that those who already have a job have a protected position. The working hours for those below 18 are strictly regulated in Sweden.

- There is a long history of labour market policy that aims to improve the situation of young people. The names of the measures have changed over time as well as the organization of the business. The state has had and still has an important role in this policy, but also the municipalities have been active in the area. It is difficult to get an overall picture, as the municipalities do not have the same standardized and comprehensive statistics as the state has through the Public Employment Service. A main impression is that the policy is fragmented at various levels and that there is uncertainty as to its effectiveness.

- The economic crisis that emerged in 2008 has been shorter than and not as severe as in many other European countries. But there have been worries also in Sweden for those who neither work nor are in education (the NEETs). The policy has been mainly the same as before the crisis: trying to get as many as possible to complete secondary education and in other case to place the unemployed and those with special problems in labour market policy programmes, to a high extent in programmes especially designed for young people.

Key words:
Youth unemployment; NEET; vocational education; labour market policy
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Arbetsförmedlingen (Public employment service)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMS</td>
<td>Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen (earlier name for the Public employment service)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSN</td>
<td>Centrala studiemedelsnämnden (the Swedish Government authority in charge of financial aid for studies and home equipment loans)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPC</td>
<td>Specific requirements for collective dismissal</td>
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<td>EPR</td>
<td>Protection of permanent workers against dismissals</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPRC</td>
<td>Protection of permanent workers against individual and collective dismissals</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>Komvux</td>
<td>Kommunal vuxenutbildning (adult education organized by the municipalities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAS</td>
<td>Lagen om anställningsskydd (the Law on employment security)</td>
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<td>NEET</td>
<td>Not in Employment, Education or Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCB</td>
<td>Statistiska Centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIRIS</td>
<td>The National Agency for Education’s online information system on results and quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKL</td>
<td>Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOU</td>
<td>Statens Offentliga Utredningar (Swedish official reports from a governmental or a parliamentary commission)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGA</td>
<td>Jobbgaranti för ungdomar (Youth job guarantee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UKÄ</td>
<td>Universitetskanslersämbetet (the Swedish Higher Education Authority)</td>
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1. Institutional arrangements

1.1 Governance structure

The youth-related policies are carried out at different levels of the public sector in Sweden. The main actors are the state and the municipalities. There are 290 municipalities and 21 counties/regions in Sweden. They are organized in SKL (Sveriges kommuner och landsting; Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). It is both an employer association and an organization for information and studies on different issues of common interest for the authorities in the sector. The state is responsible for the general policy formulation but also for following the development of the conditions for young people. The central state authorities have since the 17th century had a very important function in the state administration in Sweden. In a way it started already in the 16th century but it was formalized by a law in 1634. The present legal framework is from 1840. The Swedish state administration is characterized by small ministries and large independent central authorities. The government and the Parliament (Riksdagen) decide on the educational system and the labour market programmes for those who have left the secondary school.

The state is responsible for the labour market policy for those who have left the secondary school and also for education on the tertiary level. There are several central authorities for the educational sector. The most important ones are The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket), The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen), The Swedish Government authority in charge of financial aid for studies and home equipment loans (CSN, Centrala Studiestödsnämnden) and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ, Universitetskanslersämbetet).

The Swedish National Agency for Education is the central administrative authority for the public school system, publicly organised pre-schooling, school-age childcare and adult education. Its mission is: 1) to draw up clear goals and knowledge requirements, 2) to provide support for the development of preschools and schools, 3) to develop and disseminate new knowledge from research of benefit for target groups and 4) to communicate for improvement.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate scrutinizes schools and assesses applications to run an independent school (a school independent of a municipality). Those who have complaint regarding a school can do so to this authority.

The Swedish Government authority in charge of financial aid for studies and home equipment loans CSN (Centrala Studiestödsnämnden) approves and sends out Swedish financial aid for studies, which includes both grants and loans to students in Sweden and abroad. CSN also handles repayment of the loans.

There is also a central authority for vocational higher education, The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan). It is responsible for all matters
concerning higher vocational education in Sweden. It allocates for example public funds to education providers.

The operations of UKÄ (the Swedish Higher Education Authority) comprise three main areas: 1) quality assurance of higher education and appraisal of the degree-awarding powers of public-sector higher education institutions, 2) legal supervision of higher education, and 3) monitoring efficiency, follow-up and horizon scanning as well as responsibility for statistics in the higher education sector.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällsesfrågor) is a government agency that works to ensure that young people have access to influence and welfare. They conduct various studies and publish many reports.

The Swedish Public Employment Service (AF, Arbetsförmedlingen) is the central authority responsible for the labour market policy. AF has employment offices in all parts of the country. But also the municipalities have labour market policies. Most municipalities have a separate administrative unit taking care of labour market issues; in other mainly smaller municipalities it is taken care of by the central administrative unit of the municipality.

The social partners are not directly involved in the design of the youth policy, but indirectly in different ways. The unions and the employer associations have a large influence on the actual functioning of the labour market through collective agreements. They are by those agreements influencing the wage levels for young workers. The unions and the employer associations also together have special foundations (trygghetsråd) assisting those who lose their jobs covered by collective agreements. The social partners are also involved in a new programme for introducing young people in the labour market (yrkesintroduktionsprogrammet) in different branches.

1.1.1 Education and Training

Primary School

The school starting age is seven in Sweden, but it is possible to start at the age of six. For those aged six it is also possible to attend a pre-school year. Most of those aged six do so. The majority of those children are in pre-school classes organised by the municipalities. For those below that age there are day-care centres.

The schools on the primary and secondary levels are the responsibility of the municipalities. There are no fees in the Swedish school system. This also regards private schools if they get a subsidy from a municipality (the subsidy is the same per student as the municipal schools get in grants from the municipality).

The primary school studies are divided into three levels; the three levels added together means nine years in primary school. The primary school is comprehensive. The curriculum is common for all students, but there is some scope for schools to have their own profile within the context of the overall curriculum. Most students start in primary school aged seven and finish at the age of 16.

Education in English is compulsory in schools in Sweden. Education in English starts already in the first year in primary school. Later on in primary school the students select a second foreign language. Other foreign languages, beside English, are possible to study already when starting school, but in practice almost no students start such language courses before starting sixth grade. The majority of the students in primary school study a second foreign language. Traditionally German and French
were the two foreign languages in the primary school besides English but now there are more options. See Skolverket (2011). Spanish is now the most popular alternative. The number of students studying Spanish is about the same as the students studying either German or French added together.

It is possible for schools (both municipal and private schools) to have education in English also in other subjects than in the subject English language. It can be up to 50 per cent of the time in class. Such education has been evaluated. The results for the students following such education are generally good (also for those students who are native born with native born parents). See Skolverket (2010).

**Secondary School**
The secondary school lasts for three years. Most students start at the age of 16 and finish at the age of 19. The secondary school is multi-tracked with both study lines preparing for higher education and vocational study lines preparing for different occupations. It means that three years are needed for a secondary school leaving certificate. The total number of national programmes is 18 since 2011. See Skolverket (2014)

The number of students in secondary school was at its highest in 2009, with 396 000 students. The number has since then declined to 330 000 students. The explanation is the demographic development (smaller birth cohorts). The number is expected to increase in the next few years for the same reason (larger birth cohorts) according to information from Skolverket.

The most frequent study lines are the higher education preparatory programmes. In 2013/2014, the most popular of those programmes were the Social Science programme with 59 000 students, the Natural Science programme with 41 000 students, the Business Management and Economics programme with 31 000 students, the Arts programme with 26 000 students and the Technology programme with 25 000 students (there is one additional programme preparing for higher studies, but it only has a few students). The most popular vocational programmes are the Electricity and Energy programme with 15 000 students and the Building and Construction programme also with 15 000 students (according to statistical information from SIRIS, Skolverket).

Recent trends in enrolment rates indicate that a larger part of the students chose programmes preparing for higher education. The share going to vocational programmes have in ten years declined from 37 to 27 per cent of all students starting secondary school studies.

There is educational and occupational guidance in the schools (both in primary and secondary schools). The councillors are educated at the universities. The extent and regularity differs between schools – it is not regulated by law. For a survey of the history of vocational guidance in Sweden, see Lovén (2014).

There are obligatory work experience placements implemented in the school system in the last years of primary schools studies and in secondary school. In secondary school it varies between different studies lines – more and longer work experience periods for those in vocational education study lines. It can be organized both so that students are at a workplace some day(s) every week or at workplace for a longer period.

In some vocational education study lines a stay working abroad in a subsidiary to a Swedish manufacturing company is part of the programme. See Lundh Nilsson and Grönberg (2014) for a study of experiences of six of those programmes.
Tertiary Education

Those who enter tertiary education can do it at the age of 19, but many do it a higher age. It is quite common to travel or work for a period after secondary school and then start on higher education. In 2013, 15 per cent of those aged 19 in that year had started on higher education. Among those aged 21 this year 34 per cent had started on higher education in 2013 or earlier, and among those aged 24 in 2013 as many as 44 per cent had started on higher education this year or earlier. See Universitetskanslersämbetet (2014b).

There are large differences in the share going to higher education between different regions, and women are going to higher education much more often than men. The counties with highest shares who start in higher education are Stockholm, Uppsala and Skåne counties (all three counties have big universities; Stockholm University, Uppsala University and Lund University). In 2013, 51 per cent of women and 36 of men had started on higher education this year or earlier among those who in 2013 were 24 years.

Almost all universities are public owned by the state. There are three exceptions. Stockholm School of Economics is privately owned but receives subsidies from the state covering the costs for its educational activities. The state has also changed two universities from being state universities to be owned by foundations (giving them a more independent but still state-controlled position). Those two are Chalmers in Gothenburg (a university of technology) and Jönköping University College. All other universities are state authorities.

The four largest universities, each with several faculties, are Gothenburg University, Lund University, Stockholm University and Uppsala University. There are several other universities and university colleges not being specialized to only one faculty, but also several universities for studies in specific fields (as medicine, technology or art).

There are no tuition fees for students who are citizens in Sweden or of other EU/EES countries as well as of Switzerland, those with a permanent residence permit in Sweden and those who have a temporary residence permit due to other reasons than studies. Other students have since the autumn semester 2011 to pay a fee. It varies with faculty and is the same as the state grant to a university for each student with residence permits in Sweden, other EU/EES countries or Switzerland.

The introduction of fees for students coming from outside EU/EES and Switzerland led to changes in the composition of students from abroad in higher education. The total number of new students arriving from another country was 22 000 in the autumn semester of 2010, 14 400 in the autumn semester of 2011, and 15 400 in the autumn semester of 2012. The numbers of students from EU/EES and Switzerland increased. The numbers were 8 400, 8 950 and 9 400, respectively, in the three years. Most students from those countries arrived from Germany and France. The number of exchange students from other countries (who are exempted from paying fees due to that) changed only marginally, 2 700, 2 700 and 2 500 in the three years, but the number of free-movers, those who have to pay fees, fell significantly. The numbers were 7 600, 1 600 and 1 700, respectively in the three years. The number of free-movers, especially from Asia, has increased slightly during the last two years (UKÄ and SCB 2014). The largest reductions were for those coming from China, India, Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh. For those coming for HDI countries like Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the US, Canada and Australia the changes were small (most of the students who come from those high HDI countries are exchange students). See Universitetskanslersämbetet (2013).
A large number of students with residence in Sweden are studying in other countries. The number of students with study grants from Sweden but studying in another country was 28,900 in 2013/2014 and 28,300 in 2012/13 compared to 24,600 in 2003/04. The most popular countries of destination in 2013/14 were the US, the UK, Australia, Denmark and Poland; three English-speaking countries and two neighbouring countries (see UKÄ and SCB, 2013, 2014).

Sweden is using large resources for higher education. Measured in purchasing power adjusted costs it is highest among EU countries, and among OECD countries it is only higher in the US, Canada and Switzerland. See Universitetskanslersämbetet (2014). Studying the proportion of 30–34 years old with at least two years of tertiary education it is close to 50 percent in Sweden. It is among the highest shares in the European Union.

The studies at the tertiary level are divided in three cycles. The first-cycle qualifications are two years for a Higher Education Diploma and three years for a Bachelor. The second-cycle qualification is two years for a Master degree. The third-cycle qualifications are either two years for a Licentiate or four years for a Ph.D.

Students on the first and second cycle get a monthly pay during the semesters (for 40 weeks; not for the summer months). The student aid (studiemedel) is partly a grant and partly a loan. In 2013 the grant proportion was 28,280 SEK and the loan ceiling 61,960 SEK. It can be paid for a maximum of six academic years. The student aid is income tested. See Universitetskanslersämbetet (2014a).

The minimum requirements for entering the tertiary education system in Sweden are either to have graduated from secondary school at a study line preparing for higher studies, or after completing extra studies with grades in Swedish, English and Mathematics at a specified level for those coming from vocational study lines. Different study lines at the tertiary level also often have other specific requirements.

Many university educations have periods of work practice as a part of the education as for example for those studying medicine, social work, psychology or political science just to mention a few. The length and the organization of the period of study vary. The students are in some cases paid a wage and in other cases they get a monthly pay from the state system, which as mentioned is partly a grant and partly a loan.

The PhD students should get a full wage from the university. This is a requirement for that the university is allowed to accept a student for graduate studies. The PhD programme is for four years. It is possible for a student to have a five-year programme, if the student is working part-time (20 per cent per year) for example as a research assistant or a teaching assistant.

There are traineeship programmes for university graduates in different companies. They are voluntary for the employers.

There is also vocational higher education of different types – most of them with a duration between one and three years. The students in those educations get the same student pay as students in other forms of higher education. An exam is given after at least one year of study, and an advanced exam after two years of study.

Training System

Vocational schools are the dominating form of vocational training in Sweden (on both the secondary and the tertiary level). Those leaving the educational system are generally not fully trained. It means
that the completing training has to be done at the work-places. Recently there has started a new programme for introducing young people in the labour market (yrkesintroduktionsprogrammet) run by the Public Employment Service in cooperation with employers and trade unions.

Formal apprenticeship is rather uncommon in Sweden, mainly occurring in craft occupations, so on-on-the-job training is the dominating form of vocational training besides training in vocational schools. The present and former governments have both been in favour of expanding apprenticeship training but they have not yet succeeded. Very few students apply to the apprenticeship programmes. See Olofsson and Wadensjö (2006, 2014, 2015).

The status of vocational education and training on the secondary school level is lower than that of general/academic training. It means that most young people go to the study lines preparing for higher education. The vocational training is as earlier mentioned mainly provided in schools followed by training at the work-place after completed secondary school studies, i.e. it is not like the so-called dual-system as in countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland, where school education and on-the-job training take place alternately.

In Sweden there are only a few occupations were professional certificates are obligatory, such as medical doctors, dentists, plumbers and electricians. Certificates can be obtained for some other occupations as well, but those certificates do not prohibit others from doing the work tasks the certificates cover. Following a recent change in the legislation, teachers in primary and secondary schools now need a licensure for working as a teacher. For an analysis of different forms of regulations of occupations (registration, certification and licensure) and their effects in the US see Kleiner (2014). There are not any corresponding studies on the Swedish experiences.

The social partners are important for education and training in some occupations, especially for those in the building and construction industries.

Unfortunately, the unemployment statistics are not very helpful to get a clear picture of the situation for young people. As most young people are in school, the unemployment rate is calculated on the basis of only a part of the young population. Also, half of those young people being unemployed according to the labour force surveys are full-time in school and are just looking for a part-time job to have besides studies. And, quite a few of the young people who are being unemployed according to the labour force surveys are in full-time studies and have got a job for the summer vacation and wait to start until the semester ends (explaining a large increase in the youth unemployment in the three months before the summer vacation starts; a statistical artefact common in countries where many students are working during the summer vacation). These complications have led to that NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) has been more and more used as measure of the problems for the young people in Sweden. The NEETs have been in the centre for the public debate for some time. A governmental commission on the NEETs (on the number, development and policy) was appointed in 2012 and delivered its reports in 2013. See SOU 2013:13 and SOU 2013:74. A few years ago governmental commissions dealing with the situation of young people only dealt with youth unemployment and not with NEET. See e.g. SOU 2007:18.

But also this measure is not without problems. It includes young people who travel, study or work in other countries, commute for a job in Copenhagen or Oslo and also those who have returned to their home countries but not reported it to the authority in charge of the population statistics (the tax authority, Skatteverket). But it is a better measure than the unemployment rate. Large NEET groups are those with disability pensions (disabled youths) and those who have left school early (not
completed secondary school) and live at home with their parents being unemployed or out of the labour force. Of those aged 19 years in 2013, 2.1 per cent of women and 2.9 of men had a disability pension and among those aged 20–24 the corresponding figures are 2.2 and 2.4 per cent, respectively. See Försäkringskassan (2014).

A recent study by Niknami and Schröder (2014) found that among young people (18–25) women with children, men, those with parents with low education, and foreign born were overrepresented in the NEET-group compared to women with no children, women, those with higher education and native born. Among those aged 25 their own education was very important for their likelihood of being in the NEET-group. One explanation for the overrepresentation of foreign born among the NEETs is unregistered emigration (having left the country without notifying the authority in charge of the population statistics).

Statistics Sweden (2013) used information from labour force surveys to conduct a study on the youth labour markets in nine countries comparing Sweden with the four other Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway – and four other European countries – Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The study shows that Sweden is among the countries with the lowest NEET rates, and that Sweden and Finland among young people have the lowest share long term unemployment periods (more than six months) and the highest shares short unemployment periods as percentages of all unemployment periods.

Olli Segendorf (2013) deals with the youth labour market situation in the Nordic countries in a study for the Nordic Council of Ministries. She shows that Sweden has relatively low NEET rates for young adults aged 25–29 and 30–34 years.

How to handle the early school leavers is one issue very much discussed in Sweden. It has been put forward a proposal in the political debate from the Social Democratic Party that the secondary school should become compulsory as in some other countries, meaning that twelve years should become the minimum number of years in education. No decisions have been taken up to now. There are possibilities to take up studies for those 20 years and older on the secondary school level at municipal schools for adults (Komvux) or at people’s high schools organized by various associations. About 155 000 took part in secondary school education on the municipal school for adults in 2012. The people’s high school (Folkhögskola) had on average 28 000 students in 2012 on longer courses (some of these courses are on the secondary school level, but other courses are on other levels).

1.1.2 Active Labour Market Policies for Young People

There is a governmental authority in charge of the labour market policy, AF. The first municipal employment offices started already in 1902 in two municipalities (Helsingborg and Gothenburg) but spread fast to other municipalities. It became compulsory to organise public employment offices for the bigger cities and the counties in 1935. It was motivated by that this year a state support to the unemployment insurance societies was introduced and that a control of that those getting support really searched for a job was deemed necessary. In 1940 the employment offices became nationalized temporary as a result of the mobilization of the Swedish economy during the war. The organization became permanently a state authority from 1948 on. The active labour market policy became an integral part of the Swedish model launched by the Swedish trade union economists Rudolf Meidner and Gösta Rehn in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The three main parts of that model are a restrictive macroeconomic policy (avoiding inflation), a solidarity wage policy (equal pay
for equal work) and an active labour market policy (as for example labour market training and mobility support; but also a selective labour demand policy through job placement of unemployed in public investment programmes). That policy programme was accepted as the Government’s policy at the end of the 1950s and the budget of Labour Market Administration was much increased in the 1960s.

AF (Arbetsförmedlingen; earlier called AMS, Arbetsmarknadstyrelsen) has been in charge of the labour market policy programmes also for young people since its start. But the municipalities are to a large extent the part of the public sector being responsible for the labour market programmes for young people.

The public employment services (AF) in Sweden provides job matching services and different forms of labour market programmes. It does not charge the unemployed for their services, as it is publicly financed. AF is helping people by means of employment training and job counselling services aimed at improving application skills, e.g. preparing for interviews and writing curriculum vitae. It should be stressed that the majority of people searching for a job find work by other means, such as their networks (family, friends), internet, newspaper advertisement, and by actively taking contact with employers. There are also some private employment agents. They are only allowed to take a fee from the employers and not from those looking for a job. Temporary employment agencies also have a part in the matching in the labour market. Young people are overrepresented among those employed as temps.

The AF has a large staff and is trying to meet the needs of its young clients. AF administers the relevant labour market policy programmes. It has a well-established administrative capacity, and highly professional staff but they are most likely too few. AF has recently announced that they will hire 1 500 more people to their professional staff in the next few years.

The payroll tax is half the amount for those below 26 years than for those 26 or older. The intention is that it should increase the number of young people hired. The value added tax was also recently lowered for the restaurants. Younger people are much overrepresented in that sector compared to their share in other sectors. The intention with the reduction of the tax rate was that more people, especially young people, should find work in the sector.

Young people registered as unemployed at the Public Employment Service (AF) take part in similar labour market programmes as older workers, but there are certain regulations for those under the age of 25. See below. According to AF regulations, all young unemployed that have been registered for more than 90 days should be assigned to the so called youth job guarantee (UGA, Jobbgaranti för ungdomar). In 2013, 39 per cent of young people registered at the employment offices as being unemployed or in some other labour market programmes were registered in that programme. One should note that persons that have a registered disability are less likely to take part in the program UGA. The same holds true for young persons that recently immigrated to Sweden and are registered at the AF as refugees or family migrants. When becoming registered in the program, they get vocational guidance and job coaching in the first three months within the programme. In case they still are unemployed, some may get either employment training or work experience, regularly for about three months, which is shorter than “regular” employment training and work experience that those 25 or older can be assigned to. They get economic support corresponding to the unemployment benefits or another type of economic support if not fulfilling the requirement for unemployment benefits (the compensation is higher for those 20 years and older than for those below 20 years; the lowest compensation is paid to those without secondary education and under the age of 20). AF pays a
municipality a fixed amount per day if it is carrying out such activities. Most of those taking part have completed secondary school. Of those who take part the majority continue to employment or education. See Arbetsförmedlingen (2014a). For explanations and evaluation of the UGA, see Arbetsförmedlingen (2011)

The Swedish labour market policy, including measures for young people, has as mentioned a long tradition. For young people it is a combination of measures especially designed for this age group and, in case those measures are not fruitful, similar programs as those applying for older age groups.

We will here give some more detailed information on the participation of young people in some of the more general labour market programmes in 2013 (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014a).

1. Labour market education has traditionally been of an important part of the labour market policy. In 2013, 43 600 took part in labour market education at least once during the year. 12 800 of them were younger than 25 years.

2. There are different programmes of subsidized work practice as a part of the labour market policy. In 2013, 80 100 took part in such programmes. 33 400 of them were younger than 25 years.

3. Occupational and labour market guidance is another labour market programme. In 2013, 17 300 took part in occupational and labour market guidance. 1 900 of them were younger than 25 years.

4. Work rehabilitation is another labour market programme (mainly for those with different forms of disabilities). In 2013, 44 000 took part in work rehabilitation. 6 800 of them were younger than 25 years.

5. There is a programme giving those who need education before they start on labour market education or another labour market programme some introductory education. In 2013, 86 800 took part in preparatory education. 24 900 of them were younger than 25 years.

6. The programme with most participants is the job and development guarantee programme. In 2013, 176 600 took part in the job and development guarantee programme. 32 400 of them were younger than 25 years.

There are several other programmes, most of them with few young participants, for example programmes supporting disabled workers or recently arrived refugees.

There are also programmes on the municipal level. Many municipalities organise jobs for young people. It is very common to organize jobs for young people during the summer vacation, but also to organize jobs for young people who have long unemployment periods. The remuneration differs especially regarding the pay in summer jobs. There has been a lively media discussion regarding the different pay rates in different municipalities; the pay is very low in some municipalities. In the summer of 2014, the numbers of special summer jobs for those aged 16–18 years were 75 000 in the municipalities and 3 000 in the counties. It corresponds to 25.5 per cent of all aged 16–18 years. See SKL (2014). Some in this age group may have ordinary jobs in the vacation period in the municipalities and the counties. For three studies of local labour market policy activities organized in some municipalities, see Olofsson et al. (2009), Ungdomsstyrelsen (2011) and Lundahl (2014). The employment activities for young people on the municipal level are also supported by a law making it possible for the municipality to require the young people below 26 to accept work organized by the municipality or lose the economic support (social assistance) from the municipality.

There are public programmes that focus specifically on disabled people, which also apply to young people. Regularly these programmes are different forms of wage subsidies; the second most
important programme is sheltered work (in the state-owned company *Samhall*) as well as with other public employers. In 2013 it was decided that AF together with the Social Insurance Board should provide special measures to help young people with a disability pension to enter the labour market. See Arbetsförmedlingen (2014b). The main aim of that collaboration was to assess to what extent persons are “work ready” and can be registered as job seekers at the AF. There are certain measures that exclusively apply to persons that have severe problems; one of those measures is supported employment, where specially trained staff at the AF helps that person to find work and sometimes even follow that person to the workplace, so called “supported employment”.

There are also some minor labour market policy projects financed by the European Social Fund. See Ungdomsstyrelsen (2012) for details.

### 1.1.3 Employment Protection Legislation and Working Time Regulation

The Swedish labour market was in many years only regulated by collective agreements. But in the 1970 several laws regulating the labour market were introduced. The most important one is the Law on employment security (LAS) from 1974. It says that a firm cannot layoff an employee without an acceptable reason. If they want to lay off people due to a decrease in their demand for workers, those recently hired should be the first to go (last in, first out), if they do not get an agreement with the relevant trade unions to sidestep that rule. If the employer intends to lay off more than five employees the employer has to notify the Public Employment Service (AF) in advance. The length of the notification period varies with the number to be laid off. When an employee is told that he/she will be laid off the employee has a period before the layoff actually takes place; this period varies with how long the person has been employed.

It is possible with fixed term contracts for different reasons as for example as replacement for employees being temporary absent, for those 67 years and older, for seasonal work, for a job taking a fixed period of time and for a probationary employment contract (up to six months). The law on employment protection (LAS) is protecting up to the age of 67 (before 2003 the age covered was up to 65). There is now a lively political discussion regarding a further increase of that age to 69.

Many young people have fixed term contracts. See table 1 below. A part of them are students working in the summer or combining studies with some work besides and not a big problem for most concerned. But for others it could be a number of several short work periods after completed studies making it difficult to start independent living.
Table 1. Share (per cent) with fixed term contracts in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–24</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The labour force surveys.

According to the OECD indicators Sweden has employment protection legislation around the unweighted OECD average. For EPRC (protection of permanent workers against individual and collective dismissals) the value for Sweden is 2.52 and the OECD unweighted value is 2.29. For EPR (protection of permanent workers against individual dismissals) the value for Sweden is 2.52 and the OECD unweighted value is 2.04. For EPC (specific requirements for collective dismissal) the value for Sweden is 2.50 and the OECD unweighted value is 2.91.

There is no severance pay according to law in Sweden, but there is according to different collective agreements. Those agreements also contain several other types of support for those who have lost their jobs.

There are several rules regulating the working hours for youth below 18 years of age. It is forbidden for young people to work nights (between 20.00 and 06.00). They should have a period not working for 14 hours not interrupted by work for every 24 hours period. When studying they are only allowed to work two hours per school day and on Saturday and Sunday at most seven hours for those two days taken together. There are many other detailed rules for those below 18, even for those who have completed their education. See Arbetsmiljöverket (2012). Those regulations may lead to that the employers avoid hiring those below 18. In table 2 below, the working hours for young people are shown.

Table 2. Average agreed working time per week for different age groups in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–24</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The labour force surveys.
There are also rules restricting the types of work young people below 18 years of age are allowed to do. For a list of 29 works tasks not allowed for those below 18 years of age (in one case 20 years), see Arbetsmiljöverket (2012). These rules restrict the labour market options for young people in a number of occupations.

1.1.4 Minimum Wage

Sweden does not have minimum wage legislation. But Sweden has minimum wages through collective agreements. They do not cover all of the labour market, but around 90 per cent of all employed are working at workplaces covered by collective agreements. The minimum wages according to the agreements are lower for young newly employed workers than for those who have worked in a firm for a longer period. The agreements differ between sectors. The unions are controlling that agreements are followed. The wages are lower for some young workers who are in training (who are in training for a part of the time at the employer). One example is the agreement for metal workers. The wages are lower for those who are in vocational education and also for those that work during the summer vacation and are 16–18 years old.

The minimum wages according to collective agreements may be a hinder for employment of young workers but could also in the case of monopsony lead to a situation with both higher wages and higher employment for young workers. On the other hand, the relatively high youth wages may make it possible for young people who get a job to rent an own apartment and by that being able to form a family.

1.1.5 Welfare Benefits and Labour Taxation

The main sources of tax income are payroll taxes, the value added tax and the income tax. The income tax consists in practice of three taxes. One is the municipality income tax (it is a fixed percentage of the income that varies between municipalities; on average the tax rate was 20.62 per cent in 2013), a second one is the county council income tax (it is a fixed percentage of the income that varies between counties; on average the tax rate was 11.11 per cent in 2013) and a third one is the state income tax (a progressive tax; it starts at income parts over a certain level and becomes higher for income parts over another, higher level). Most people only pay the first two of the three taxes as their incomes are below the threshold for the state income tax.

The social insurances are income based in Sweden. It is so for unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, benefits after a work injury, disability pensions and old age pensions (the national system is a defined contribution system). There are income ceilings in the systems. The national insurance systems are complemented by collectively agreed supplementary compensations. The benefits are not income or wealth tested. There is a child allowance. It is fixed amount that is not income and wealth tested. For statistical information and also a presentation of the regulation of the different programmes, see Försäkringskassan (2014, 2014a).

Besides the social insurance system there are social welfare benefits. Compensation in form of such benefits is income and wealth tested. This system is on the municipal level but there is state guidance regarding minimum levels.
1.1.6 From School to Work

Young people enter the labour market gradually leaving education for employment. Table 3 shows the share employed in 2014 in three age groups.

Table 3. The share (per cent) employed in three age groups in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour force surveys.

We see that the share employed gradually increase with increasing age. The employment rate is similar for men and women. Part-time work besides education is slightly more frequent among female teenagers than among male teenagers and women in their twenties continue more often to education than men.

We will now look at how common it is to be both outside education and employment. See table 4 for information for 2014.

Table 4. The share (per cent) belonging to the NEET group of all in two age groups in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour force surveys.

Few belong to the NEET-group among those aged 15–19 (most of them are in school), but around 10 per cent do so among those aged 20–24. This is an issue much discussed in Sweden.

Among those who are 25 years and older the employment rate is high in Sweden. Of those aged 25–29 it is together with Norway highest among the Nordic countries and of those aged 30–34 it is highest among the Nordic countries. See Olli Segendorf (2013).
2. Policy Innovations

Youth unemployment and as well in the last few years NEET have been widely discussed in Sweden, especially after that the economic crisis started in Sweden in 2009. It is important to remember that the crisis has been less severe in Sweden than in most other countries. The policy has mainly been more of the same. Sweden has a long history of different programmes intended to eliminate youth unemployment. However, there has been a number of minor policy changes intended to improve the situation for young people. I will here present the most important ones.

1. Education and Training
   a. There have been (failed) attempts to start more apprenticeship training. Few young people want to be apprentices. Vocational study lines in the secondary school dominate vocational training on that level, but they are also becoming less popular. Most young people prefer to go to the theoretical study lines in secondary school. By doing that they feel that they have more option after secondary school. See Olofsson and Wadensjö (2014). As a response to that development a pilot vocational training programmes was introduced in 2013 in cooperation with a union and an employment association. See Arbetsförmedlingen (2015) for report on the results during the first two years of that programme.

   b. There has been introduced various forms of support for students doing homework. The intention is to help the students with problems of doing their homework at home. The programmes are of two types: 1) homework classes after ordinary school time (the schools are subsidized by the state) and 2) a tax reduction for parents who pay for buying homework assistance to their children (a part of a programme called RUT (Cleaning, Maintenance and Laundry work); this part of RUT started January 1, 2013). Those programmes have not been evaluated yet. The present government intends to abolish the possibility to get a tax reduction for parents who buy homework assistance to their children, but to support the expansion of homework classes organized by the schools.

2. Active Labour Market Policies
   a. There have been many attempts in the municipalities to arrange jobs for young people during summer vacations and also for some young people with severe labour market problems. There is one evaluation of the long-term effects of student summer jobs in one municipality, Falun. See Alam, Carling and Nääs (2013). They follow the

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1 The work carried out, in respect of which the client applies for a RUT tax deduction, must relate to the core domestic work area, and be carried out in a dwelling that he or she lives in or uses as a second home (weekend home), or that the client’s parents live in or use as a second home (weekend home). Domestic services such as cleaning, maintenance and laundry confer the right to a RUT tax deduction. Moreover, child-minding (child care), care services and simpler garden work can give the right to RUT deductions.
participants up to the age of 29. This study shows that there are no effects for the boys regarding their future labour market situation but a positive the effects for the girls, especially those with low grades from the primary school. It should be underlined that the study is just for one municipality and that the results may differ in other municipalities with other composition of the labour demand.

b. A Youth Job Guarantee Programme (UGA) was introduced December 3, 2007 with the intention to enable the Labour Market Administration to help young people to get a job. It replaced some earlier programmes. It covers young people aged 16–24 who have been registered at the employment office at least three months without having a job but also some other groups as those working part-time and being part-time unemployed, those who are studying Swedish for immigrants (SFI) on part-time, those who have taken part in some other labour market policy programmes and those who are on part-time parental leave. For a presentation of the programme and a follow-up study, see Martinson and Sibbmark (2010).

3. Employment Protection Legislation and Working Time Regulation

a. There have been no major changes in the Employment Protection Legislation (LAS) and working time regulation since the crisis started. The changes made during the last ten years have mainly been related to the employment security of older workers and employees on parental leave. There is an intense political discussion regarding the effects of LAS on youth employment. See Engdahl and Forslund (2015).

4. Welfare Benefits and Labour Taxation

a. The payroll tax has been lowered for those below 26 (and those aged 65 or older). The change was a gradual process. The payroll tax was lowered for young people aged 18–25 from 32.42 per cent to 21.32 per cent from July 1, 2007. From January 1, 2009 the upper age limit was changed to 26 years and the payroll tax was at the same time lowered to 15.52 percent. An evaluation of the reform, Egebark and Kaunitz (2013), show that the effects on youth employment have been quite small and the costs high (as also those already employed have been included in the reform). Their conclusion is “we conclude that payroll tax cuts are an inefficient way to boost employment for young individuals”. The present government intends to abolish the payroll tax reduction for young people.

b. The value-added tax was lowered for restaurant service and catering (with the exception for alcohol) from January 1, 2012 from 25 to 12 percent with the intention that the employers should hire more workers, especially young workers. The effects of this change were evaluated by Konjunkturinstitutet (The National Institute of Economic Research). See Konjunkturinstitutet (2013). It shows that the effects have been small. The present government has declared that it intend to change the pay-roll tax back for restaurant services and catering back to 25 percent.
3. Assessment of effects on youth employment

Most young people enter the labour market without severe problems in Sweden. They are not becoming unemployed when they leave school, and if they get unemployed most of them have only short unemployment periods. It is much more common among older workers to have long unemployment periods (in many cases after having been laid off). But there are several young people who have serious problems in establishing themselves in the labour market being either long-term unemployed or out of the labour force for long periods.

One group with serious problems at the Swedish labour market consists of the few who never have started studies in secondary school and the many more who have started but not completed their studies in secondary school. The share not completing is higher in the vocational than in the theoretical study lines. The number not completing vocational secondary school studies increased than all vocational study lines in 1991 changed to be for three years instead of for two years. A new grading system introduced 1994–1996 may also explain why so many are not completing their studies. See Björklund et al. (2010).

A second group that has problems in being established in the labour market, partly overlapping the above mentioned group, consists of refugees who have arrived as teenagers together with parents or as unaccompanied minors to Sweden from another country (most of them from the Middle East, Afghanistan or Africa). The size of this group with problems is increasing as the number of refugees arriving is increasing (but the share of the refugees who have labour market problems is not increasing).

A third group with problems in entering the labour market are those with different forms of disabilities. This group is also increasing, especially those with psychological problems. Many are out of the labour force having different forms of income transfers (disability pensions are the most common form).

Many in those three groups belong to the NEET group. A part of them are unemployed, others are out of the labour force (being out of the labour force is more common among young women than among young men among the young refugees).

Many attempts have been made on the state and the municipal levels to help these young people. But these programmes have not succeeded yet according to evaluations. More studies evaluating those programmes are needed. Several governmental studies have also been made with the intention to try to find ways to handle the situation. See for example SOU 2013:13 and SOU 2013:74.

It is for example important to study if prolonged education for those who have problems in school. Is secondary school for all a better solution than subsidized work or other labour market programmes for those aged 16–19? A specific programme can of course be efficient for some persons but not for others.

The labour market programs for adults have been evaluated many times. There are however few studies of high quality in this field specializing on the programmes for young people. See Engdahl and Forslund (2015) for a survey of those evaluations.
One explanation put forward for that some young people have problems in establishing themselves in the Swedish labour market is high minimum wages. Sweden has no minimum wage legislation but minimum wages according to collective agreements. These minimum wages may be too high for those young people who have low productivity. According to available recent studies, Skedinger (2011), Konjunkturinstitutet (2010) and Forslund et al. (2014), there are some negative employment effects for at least some young people (there may positive effects for those with a high capacity). One policy measure intended to counteract the effects of high minimum wages is lower payroll taxes for employers who employ young people. As earlier mentioned the effects have been small. See Egebark and Kaunitz (2013).
4. Core Issues and Challenges of the Swedish Case

I will here outline the core issues discussed in Sweden during the last few years.

1. The situation for those not entering or not completing secondary education is problematic. Many are out of the labour market or unemployed. If they get a job, it is mainly temporary jobs. Should secondary education (in three years) be made compulsory or are other measures, such as labour market programmes, better for this group? The present government is in favour of making secondary education compulsory, but the opposition in Parliament (the parties forming the former government) has a different view.

2. The share of young people going to vocational secondary educational study lines is declining and the attempts to recruit young people to apprentice programmes have not been successful. Both the government and the opposition are in favour of reforms of the vocational education system making them more attractive. The problem is to design and implement such policies. One way of doing so much discussed is to involve the employers more than at present. The extension of existing subsidies and the introduction of various new forms of subsidies are discussed.

3. Many young people arrive to Sweden as refugees, many as unaccompanied minors. The unaccompanied minors are mainly boys (75 per cent). Most of them are 16 or 17 years old (those coming at the age of 18 or older are not counted as minors). Many of them have problems in school but also in establishing themselves in the labour market after leaving school. How should the integration policy be designed for this group? Better and more intense education in Swedish is discussed as part of the solution.

4. A related problem is housing segregation leading to school segregation. It has become even more pronounced by that it now is possible for the pupils to make a choice of school. The native-born children with native-born parents are to an increasing extent going to other schools than those with foreign background. The results are much better in the schools dominated by students with Swedish background compared to those where a majority of students has foreign background. For a recent study, see Neuman (2015). In this study the outcomes for natives and second generation immigrants are compared keeping many characteristics as for example the parents’ education constant. The results are worse for both the natives and the second generation immigrants if the immigrant share is high in the neighbourhood. The schools with pupils with a background correlated with worse results are already now getting more grants from the public sector (the municipalities and the state) but that is not enough to compensate for the social differences. The political discussion is intense regarding how to counteract housing and school segregation.

5. The number of young people with different forms of impairments has increased during the last decades. It is especially so for those with psychological impairments. It is also the group that is most difficult to help. There are a number of labour programmes for disabled persons
including disabled young people. The most important program is subsidized employment at ordinary work places. There also sheltered workshops being part of Samhall a governmental institution. But the number on young disabled people on income transfer programmes is increasing. The number of young people with a disability pension (called aktivitetsersättning) is increasing at the same time as the number of those aged 30 or more with a disability pension (called sjukersättning) is decreasing. For a survey of evaluations of the programmes for disabled young people see Engdahl and Forslund (2015). It has been difficult to evaluate the labour market programs for disabled youth as it is difficult to find young people suited to be the comparison group or to find natural experiments.

6. Most young people are either established in the labour market when they become 25 and or continue in education. The NEET rate is low for those 25 years and older in Sweden compared to most other countries. See Olli Segendorf (2013) for a comparison with the other Nordic countries. But some remain outside both education and the labour market also in this age group. The groups overrepresented among the NEETs are those without an exam from secondary school, the foreign born and to some extent their children and those with functional impairments. It has been in focus for the public debate what to do to help persons classified as NEET. See for example Engdahl and Forslund (2015) and Olofsson and Wadensjö (2015).
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