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## **Identification of obstacles and some examples of good practise/ideas how to overcome obstacles**

When identifying what kind of obstacles there are for the targetgroups in the Equal-project we have found a wide range. This report will just mention some of them, those who we find most important.

The report is built on communications within the KOA-workinggroup, interviews with guidance counselors in the Kista borough, officers working with recognition of competences in the city's Education administration and other departments, Jobcenter service, representatives for adult education organisations (african and minority groups) etc.

### ***Highlighted obstacles***

- **Unsufficient knowledges in the Swedish or English language**

Entering the Swedish adult education system or high schools/university often requires grades in the Swedish language (Swedish for immigrants – SFI) and English. There are deficiencies in the education system for immigrants who have to learn Swedish. For the moment there are two inquiries run by the government with focus on the introduction for new immigrants/refugees and languagetraining (Swedish for immigrants). Proposals are expected in September 2003. There is also a researchstudy on the receptionssystem for refugees/new immigrants in the City of Stockholm with regard to improve the reception, the introduction and the language education (SFI).

- **Guidance**

We need many more guidance counselors with good knowledges of the requirements/competence demands for entrance to the highschools and the labourmarket. How do we reach our targetgroup – some boroughs have with success tried "hunting" in different places for instance in librarys, child welfare clinics and internet-café. Guidance in mother tongue language has also been tried with good success.

- **Selfsupport during the studyperiod/adult education**

There are different systems in Sweden available and they are all connected with requisites which sometimes cause problems

- unemployment benefit – labour market training
- studygrant och study loan – adult education and highschool
- complementary social allowance (when the studygrant/study loan or unemployment benefit is insufficient for self-support).

From 2003, January 1<sup>st</sup> there is a new grant called "recruitment grant" mainly directed to unemployed people with poor education (just primary school). This grant can replace the social allowance and the experiences so far is that it reduce the stigmatization effect as the social allowance give.

Some people don't take loans- reasons can be related to traditions in the society they live (class, religion, principals). Some students already have debts and are unsure if they will get a job so they can pay back when finishing their studies.

By creating a win-win system where study-efforts give a job has been successful in a project directed toward African men and women, "Knowledge development in Rinkeby". The same concept you can find in another project "Stockholm Matching".

- **Recognition of competence** (theoretical studies/grades as well as work-related experiences /vocational skills)

#### Evaluation of foreign education

Graduated from upper secondary school

If you have a complete education (graduated) from upper secondary school the education can be recognized by the National Agency for Services to University and University College. It takes several months to get your degrees evaluated.

What can be done to shorten this process ?

People with incomplete education is directed toward guidance counselors at the universities, highschools or municipal adult education. It is a great variety how well these evaluation systems are organized and it also depends on the guidance counselors competence.

Graduated from university or highschool.

The National Agency for Higher Education evaluates foreign programmes of higher education for purposes of employment in Sweden. Only programmes of higher education with a completed degree are evaluated. These evaluations are free of charge.

The National Agency for Higher Education assesses quality in different ways.

The Agency has launched an ambitious and comprehensive new system for assessing the quality of higher education. This means that the Agency will evaluate all general and professional degree courses, including advanced research programmes, during the course of a six-year cycle. These evaluations also look at degree authorisation.

#### Evaluation of vocational skills

Sweden has no national recognition system for evaluation of vocational skills. Many municipal experiments are running in Sweden. There are municipalities who have implemented the evaluation of vocational skills in their regular organisation. The City of Stockholm is running an experiment which ends up December 2003.

Many initiatives and experiments have been funded by the government and in 2002 there was an inquiry which proposed a national system. Since then there has been a lot of discussion and for the moment the question is on the Parliament's table.

There is a need for a national recognition system of vocational skills.

The system for evaluation of theoretical degrees must be improved.

- **Valuations and attitudes**

Valuations and attitudes have to be changed. Immigrants/refugees are often met with scepticism and we don't believe that they have capacity and knowledges which will be of use in the Swedish society and in the labourmarket. Instead of bringing use of their knowledges Sweden has a tendency to take charge of them as weak persons and act as they not are capable to take care of themselves. We must let those people bring use of their competence – see the possibilities and don't focus the problems.

There are discrimination structures in the education system as well as in the labourmarket, which have to be changed..

- **Deficiencies in co-operation between authorities**

Many people are not in the labour-market, nor in the labour-force of several reasons (one or multiple reasons). To entrance or re-entrance to workinglife or studies maybe they need help from more than one authority. Too often they only get support from the authority responsible for their benefit (social welfare allowance, unemployment benefit, sickness benefits). Many times people need support from several authorities – rehabilitation, skill-training, motivation etc. Co-operation is necessary from the individuals point of view and must be independent of the moneysupport.

Of course there are good examples on excellent co-operation, but in general it can be better and further developed. Many authorities are establishing co-operation themselves because they see the advantages and others do it because they are forced by law or other regulations. June 11, 2003, a government bill was presented to Parliament about financial coordination within the area of rehabilitation. One step on the way is taken and we have to wait and see what is coming out of it.

Stockholm also has an co-operation-agreement with the County labour board and most of the boroughs have agreements with their local employment office.

Cooperation is a question which for the moment are highlighted in Sweden and cooperation increase successively.

Payment for citizens studying in other municipalities.

Citizens are many times forced to study courses which is offered by the municipality where they live, because there are internal rules which prevent the municipality to pay for courses in other municipalities. The system limits the individual choice and is often considered as an administrative problem.

Maybe a solution can be a national system where you apply for adult education, get an adoption and then the individual choose among certified educationproviders themselves (the government pay the bill).

- **Deficiencies regarding the education system**

- Adult people often have knowledges from earlier studies or working-life and it should facilitate if it was possible to get them recognized; that should probably shorten the length of their studyperiod considerably. Even better if more courses are divided in blocks which should give the possibility to just study the missing part to get an graduation.

Several short educations for university graduates has been proposed by the Nation Agency for higher education to complete earlier studies. That may facilitate the entrance to the labourmarket.

- Not sufficient number of places in the educationsystem, especially in som bottleneck occupaion, doctors as example.
- Other bottleneckoccupations has to be upgraded. Sweden has a shortage in occupations as teachers, elderlycare and it will be even worse during the next years because of retritetment pensions. How can we attract and motivate young people to be educated in these occupations ? It's a question of work environment, salary, status....
- Infrastructure

### ***How can problem be solved – how to overcome the obstacles ?***

When discussion solutions of different obstacles/problems a lot of aspects must be considered. Some of them are mentioned below.

- What can be done to facilitate adult education ? Do we have to reach children and young people, their parents to facilitate life long lerning an early stage ? How can support and motivation for education and labourentrance raise among parents and children. How do we support young people whose parents are unemployedwith high or poor education. How to motivate children whose parents unemployed despite university degrees or similar ?
  - Co-operation between education providers (primary scool, secondary school, university), trade and industry.
  - Motivation by creating a win-win system.  
Example: Stockholm Matching – vocational training combined with work-related language-training if necessary and if you pass trough a job-guarantee  
Contacts between employers and students during the studytime.  
Traineeship.
  - Give support  
Support must be given on an individual basis and must be adapted to individual presumptions. Depending on if you are highly or poor educated the needs will differ. Some people can use IT-tools others not. Studyperiods must differ depending on educational background. Some people find distance-learning good. Others think its better to visit lerningcenter/tradional teacher conducted courses better where and get support from teachers and other students– the choise is and must be individual.

## **A Success story of Integration**

### **The way from social welfare to a job.**

In some parts of Stockholm we have for many years a large percentage of both foreigners and problems. Accordingly extra money has been provided to develop these areas. Here we will give you a success story from this work.

Traditionally it has been an impossible task to find employment for the majority of our refugees from Somalia. 1996 one of them, Ahmed Egal, took the initiative to start a school in order to prove that this task indeed was possible. This project has been supported both by the City itself and by the Board of Integration. Today we have checked the results from the courses of 6-12 months and the result is that 73 % of the 235 students are now employed. Some of the others continued their studies. The main areas of interest have so far been care institutions (mostly for elderly people), storage depots, grocery stores and .....

### **A good example is necessary**

Ahmed Egal stresses that his key to success was to first work with his own integration to become a good example. He also uses some teachers and lecturers of the same native tongue as the students, which is especially important in the work with social competence and motivation. His way to find the students is to spread the information about the school via the immigrant organizations and TV channels.

### **Employers are contacted first**

Areas in society with labour shortage like care institutions and groceries are contacted to give every student a coach and a supervisor. Everything that is studied at the school will in this way be linked to the needs of the employers and the students become strongly motivated when they step by step get acquainted with the prospective work-place. One curriculum can be to have three days at the work training and two days at school. Some courses need longer periods for theoretical studies including maths, civics and computing lessons. The training in Swedish is very structured to serve the coming work-situation. Another important issue is to train the supervisors to understand and serve the students out of their needs.

### **Basic networking**

Representatives both from the political and commercial fields of Swedish society are invited to come to the school. Every Friday there is time provided for a lecturer who often stays to eat the lunch served by the students. Sometimes many interested employers and officials from the City come for these networking meals. In this way the students feel they can be part of something bigger, which is the opposite of being only a problem.

### **Growth**

Many institutions are linked to this school, especially Rinkeby Local Council where it is situated and job centres in the area. The high quality of the teaching is provided through the cooperation with adult education colleges. New areas to cover are developing and recently the doors were opened to other groups from Africa. As there is a majority of female students a special project for their liberation process has started and a project for youth is planned. Ahmed Egal says: "When the new members of society clearly state what their needs are help is coming. You only have to meet the unemployed where she or he is and think big!"