



# Summary of report no. 26

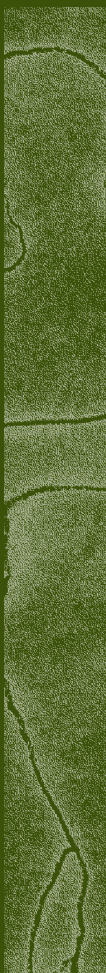


The Swedish National  
Board for Youth Affairs

[www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se)

# SWEDISH YOUTH 2001

– THE FIRST YEAR'S FOLLOW-UP OF THE SWEDISH NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY



## **Swedish YOUTH 2001**

### **– the first year's follow-up of the National Youth Policy**

This is a summary of the first year's following-up of the national youth policy. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, along with 15 different authorities and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities report the conditions of life and development work within youth politics in relation to 41 subobjectives.

## **Contents**

3	Introduction	
3	Overall Objective 1	1–20
14	Overall Objective 2	21–31
20	Overall Objective 3	32–41
27	Discussion	
31	References	

© The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 2001

*editor* Ingrid Bohlin • *proof reading* Jenny Morelli • *text* Anders Kassman – **The Summary of Report no. 26**  
*design/cover/cover pictures* **Christián Serrano** • *translation* Grant Watkins • *print* Kristianstads Boktryckeri AB  
*distribution* The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, Box 17801, 118 94 Stockholm, Sweden  
*tel* +46 8-462 53 50 • *fax* +46 8-644 88 13 • *e-mail* info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se  
*website* [www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se) • *website* [www.ungdomskanalen.nu](http://www.ungdomskanalen.nu)

# Introduction

## **A Youth Policy managed by objectives**

During the fall of 1999, the parliament accepted the government's bill 1998/99:115 "On their terms" (bet 1999/20000:Kr U4, rskr 1999/00:53). There were three suggested overall objectives for a new youth policy managed by objectives. The government later decided on 41 subobjectives in order to define the overall intentions (Govt. decision 10, 16 December 1999). The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs and the coinciding authorities were together commissioned by the government to identify, present, and distribute good examples of how youth policy can be put into practise in the regulation letter for the budget year 2000 (prop. 1998/99:115).

The follow-up of results and account of good examples were coordinated within the framework for a joint process between The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs and 15 other authorities along with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities. These authorities include National Agency for Education, National Agency for Higher Education, Swedish National Labour Market Administration, Swedish Business Development Agency, National Housing Board, National Board of Health and Welfare, National Board for Consumer Policies, National Council for Cultural Affairs, National Institute of Public Health, International Programme Office for Education and Training, Swedish Cabinet Office and the Ministries, Sida, National

Environment Protection Agency, National Integration Office, National Council for Crime Prevention.

According to the same proposal, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs shall every fourth year, along with the related authorities, carry out a thorough analysis of how the youth policy has developed. The first indepth analysis shall be ready in 2003 (prop. 1998/99:115).

## **Overall Objective 1**

### **Young People will have good conditions for living an independent life.**

The first goal of the youth policy involves different forms of fundamental needs of all people. The reason it is necessary to formulate this especially for young people is based on the idea that it is during one's early years that one acquires access to the different benefits that are a part of the goal. The main questions discussed in association to this goal have involved access to housing, employment, and education (SOU 1997:71, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs 1998, prop. 1998/99:115).

Half of the subobjectives in youth policy are within this directive goal.

## 1.

### **The share of students who leave elementary and secondary school with complete credits should increase.**

The number of students in elementary school that have not met the requirements in one or more subjects has increased from 20% school year 1997/98 to a little more than 24% school year 1999/00. The share of boys who have not reached the goal is higher than the share of girls. Even the share with secondary school competence has decreased in the last three years, from 91% 1997/98 to 89% 1999/00. A total of 83% of the students in their final year of secondary school received final credits 1999/00, which is consistent with the past four years. The share of girls is greater than the share of boys (85; 80%). There is also variation between the different programs. The greatest share of those with final credits is within the scientific program (91%) and least in the industrial program (69%). There are large differences between municipalities in number of students with final credits both in elementary and secondary school. In their account, The National Agency for Education points out the importance of following up those studies which are now going on in order to increase the knowledge of the reasons for students leaving school with incomplete credits. The variation between municipalities and schools indicates a large distribution in accomplishment and therewith the great possibilities of improvement for those who are less successful.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*



## 2.

### **The share of students who receive their first-priority position in secondary school should increase.**

According to the National Agency for Education's account, it is shown that ca. 80% of the students get into their first-priority position school year 1999/00. The share admitted first-priority positions has varied between 73 and 85%. There is little difference between the sexes. Boys are admitted in their first-choice position slightly more than girls. There are however large differences among the programs. The handicraft program is most difficult to get into at 48%. 90% get into the industrial program and the scientific program. The National Agency for Education's account sheds light on the question of the student's choice in relation to society's needs of workforce and emphasizes that there is no evidence to show that the principal of individual choice should conflict with the community's overall needs of certain competence and education.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*

### 3.

**All students who attend national vocational programs in secondary school ought to receive workplace education over a period of at least 15 weeks.**

According to the National Agency for Education's account, it is shown that none of the 13 national vocational programs can offer all of their students in their final year a workplace education in the extent that the secondary school ordinance prescribes. The average of all the programs is 63%. There is great variation among the different programs. The care program, children- and recreation program, agriculture program and building program are among the top at over 85%. The media program (29%) and electric program (21%) are at the bottom of the list. Similar results appeared in a study that SK made in 1995. According to the account, it is consequently shown that nearly 40% of the current students in their final year do not receive workplace education (WPE) in the outstretch which the secondary school ordinance prescribes. The results from the National Agency for Education's studies show at the same time that WPE makes up an important complement to the school-base education. The key to developing WPE is according to the National Agency for Education better co-operation between school and work-life.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*

### 4.

**All school children should have access to a personal e-mail address.**

In the National Agency for Education's survey of school computers in 1999, the municipalities stated that 39% of the students in elementary school had access to a personal e-mail address. Similar figures for secondary school were 59%. This area evolves quickly, and there is therefore a problem that the indicated figures are relatively old (1999). Neither the National Agency for Education nor the Delegation for IT in school has a more recent statistic. It is therefore difficult to make an accurate estimate of the fulfilment of the goal as of today. The National Agency for Education will during the year 2001, make a new survey of school computers, and it will most probably show higher figures. The government has invested 100 million SEK to support the development of supplying students and teachers with their own e-mail addresses. The funds have been distributed to the municipalities, who should be finished with their contributions in the fall of 2001.



## 5.

**The share of students, girls as well as boys, who go through secondary school's scientific respectively technical educations, shall increase.**

According to the National Agency for Education's report, the share of secondary school students that attend the scientific program increased between the years 1994/95 to 1998/99. School year 1999/00, the share decreased somewhat in comparison to the year before; the share of students in the scientific program was 20%. The National Agency for Education emphasises in its report that this figure does not give a fair picture since the special programs are not accounted for. A probable explanation for this decrease is that the share that study specially- designed programs at secondary schools has increased and scientific concentration is quite normal. The National Agency for Education does not have complete statistics over this matter as of today. Equality of the sexes has increased over the last ten years. The share of girls has increased from 33% 1990/91 to 40% 1999/00.

The National Agency for Education shows an example for a contribution to increase interest in science and technology through the NOT project. Several different interest groups in both the school and surrounding community are involved within the framework of the project in a long-term effort to change attitudes and stimulate curiosity.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*

## 6.

**All young people should be given the opportunity to get through a higher education.**

According to the National Agency for Education's summary, it is shown that the share of municipal citizens that are aged 20 and have fundamental qualifications for higher education has decreased during the period 1997-1999 from 69% to 61%. The least amount is among the major city municipalities (55% in 1999). The National Agency for Education's statistics show that the share of graduates of secondary school 1998 with formal competence to university education was 83%. Of those students who received final credits in 1997, 16% went directly to the university and 10% went directly to municipal adult education. Of those who went directly to municipal adult education from finished secondary school studies spring 1998, 40% took courses that they had already passed with approved grades in secondary school. The National Agency for Education's and the National Agency for Higher Education's follow-up points out flaws in the official statistics since there is no data on students from certain programs. The National Agency for Education emphasises the need for a proper evaluation of where the majority of students end up in order being able to state the quality of development and the suitability of the education.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*



## 7.

### **At least half of the students from every age group ought to have begun a higher education before the age of 25.**

The information in the National Agency for Higher Education's report is gathered from SCB's university records school year 1999/00. The statistics show that 43% of the students under the age of 25 had commenced university studies 1999/00. This is an increase of a little more than 2% in comparison to the year before. Differentiation between the sexes is quite apparent. School year 1999/00, 48% of the women and 38% of the men had commenced university studies. In their report, the National Agency for Higher Education points out the fact that they have not been commissioned to increase recruitment to university studies, only to follow its development. The National Agency for Higher Education deems that the fulfilment of the goal for women is soon reached. In order to reach this goal, it is necessary that the expansion of higher education continues and that the quality of recruitment and education evolves.

*Source: The National Agency for Higher Education*

## 8.

### **Unemployed youth under the age of 25 should be offered regular work, proper education, a trainee post, or an employment measure within 100 days.**

The goal falls in line with the goal, which the government stated in the guidelines for employment year 1998 and which have been an operational goal for AMV during 1998, 1999, and 2000.

The average share of long-term unemployed youth has during 2000 amounted to 3069 per month. Circa 2% of these were not offered employment education or employment measures. AMV quarterly reports show that the goal- fulfilment increased over the year in a way that the share of long-term unemployed youth without offers had decreased from 4% during the first quarter to a little more than 1% during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The situation on the youth labour market continues to improve. The share of unemployed or those who apply for a program aged 20–24 has decreased from 11–8% of the population in one year. Despite the decrease, there were 41000 young people aged 20–24 and 11000 aged 18–19 who were still unemployed in the last quarter of 2000. Society must continue to concentrate effort on the young people who are at risk of falling into long-term unemployment in order to avoid the serious consequences which long-term unemployment in early years can lead to for both the individual and society.

*Source: AMV, The Swedish National Labour Market Administration*

## 9.

**Young people between the ages of 15 and 18 should be given the opportunity for holiday work during the summer of the year 2000 for at least three weeks.**

The government has allotted state funds for holiday work since 1997. AMV received 50 million SEK during the budget year 2000 to create holiday work for youth between the ages of 13 and 18 years. According to their reports, a total of 32,700 youth have had holiday work for at least three weeks during the summer 2000 by aid of state funds. 17,500 of these are girls and 15,200 are boys. Fully 600 were youth with functional disorder and 5000 were had immigrant backgrounds. The holiday work has for the most part been organized within the municipality (88%), normally within care (ca.45%). The majority of the holiday work positions have been trainee positions. AMV reports that the initiatives only take place of normal summer jobs in exceptional cases. AMV' judgement is that the initiatives for holiday work are very valuable. The municipalities have an important roll here and many of them make a conscious effort in using the holiday work to create interest in community activities with the youth.

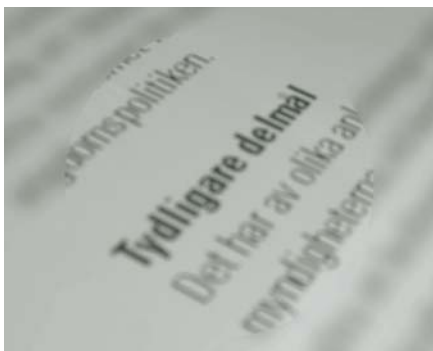
*Source: AMV, The Swedish National Labour Market Administration*

## 10.

**Young people should have know-ledge of conditions for enterprising in different forms as well as see it as feasible to run an own business.**

In NUTEK's report are the results of an attitude poll among 1000 youngsters age 16-25 which was carried out in 1998. The survey showed that the information that young people had received about the conditions for starting up an own business came mainly through school, but the youth perceived that they were given little information. Despite the lack of information, other NUTEK surveys show that nearly 60% of young people age 18-30 can imagine starting their own business. At the same time, 60% express that they probably or absolutely will not start their own business within five years. NUTEK points out the school as an important arena for increasing the knowledge of entrepreneurship, theoretically as well as in practise and shows examples of how matters about business can be put into practice in education.

*Source: NUTEK, The Swedish Business Development Agency*



## 11.

**Young people should be stimulated to creativity, independent thinking, and power of initiative through the school and the community, as these are all important traits for entrepreneurship.**

NUTEK stresses that there is a number of organisations that are working to bring forth young people's creativity both within the school and in society in general, such as different types of idea-and development centres around the country. There is no real overview of this complex branch. NUTEK points out that the authority does not at this time have any particular assignment to work with this matter. NUTEK ran the project Entrepreneurship in the School during 1998-2000, which was directed at engaging teachers in new ways of working which could in turn lead to developing creativity and power of initiative amongst the students. NUTEK brings forward the examples of concentration in increasing cooperation between the school and the trade industry. NUTEK recommends for the future a national gathering of resources and a long-term concentration in stimulating an increased entrepreneurship amongst young people.

*Source: NUTEK, The Swedish Business Development Agency*

## 12.

**The municipalities should work for meeting the young people's needs of housing. Lack of housing for young people may not hinder fulfilment of the state's goals for higher education and employment.**

In the National Housing Board's market inquiry to the municipalities in 2000, there were 35% who claimed a shortage in housing that youngsters are in demand of. This was somewhat more than the year before. The lack of housing varies throughout the land, but building plans in general do not meet the communities' demands. The supply of small apartments has decreased as a whole. According to the report, it is shown that the municipalities' speculations are that there is a planned addition of housing for students and youngsters of about 5000 units during 2000-2001. These are for the most part student housing. A survey by the Swedish National Union of Students concerning the housing situation before the fall of 2000 indicated that the student housing shortage was improving in six districts and worsening in four. The most acute shortage of student housing was in the major city areas, Stockholm in particular. The National Housing Board shows examples of efforts that certain municipalities have made to make it easier for young people to acquire housing. The most occurring is in different types of rental reduction. The National Housing Board is of the opinion that the objective seen from a political viewpoint should be formulated to completely concern young people's opportunity to housing.

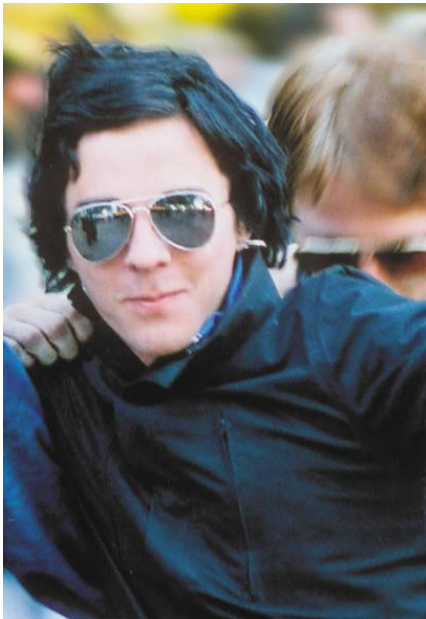
*Source: The National Housing Board, The National Agency for Higher Education*

### 13.

#### **Young people that work or study should have the means to afford to pay rent for housing of their own.**

The National Board of Health and Welfare cannot follow up this goal. To do this, statistics are needed of employment (AMV) and wages (labour market parties and SCB), over the system of study aid (CSN) and development of rental costs (National Housing Board). The National Board of Health and Welfare does not have responsibility for these areas and therefore does not have access to the follow-up base that is needed. SS is therefore not able to take responsibility for following up this part objective.

*Source: The National Board of Health and Welfare.*



### 14.

#### **Young people's need of social allowance should decrease.**

Young people's need of social allowance has decreased since the beginning of the present high business activity around 1996–97. For those with longer allowance period, 10–12 months, the allowance has not decreased as much for those with shorter, 1–3 months. It seems that single men and women without children are more sensitive to changes in business activity than other groups. Co-habiting couples can often support themselves on one income along with unemployment benefits if one of the partners becomes unemployed, and families with children are relatively protected through housing and child benefits. The National Board of Health and Welfare established the fact that unemployment is one of the most important factors of young people needing social allowance. The youngsters with low-level education and working-class or immigrant background have the most difficulty in establishing themselves in the labour market. In particular, it is the youth with a non-European background that run the risk of ending up outside the labour market. The National Board of Health and Welfare considers this part objective to be so important that it would be beneficial to reformulate it so that instead of saying that young people's needs of social allowance should decrease, it should say that the need must decrease and that special attention should be given to those who have had social allowance under a long period of time.

*Source: The National Board of Health and Welfare*

## 15.

### **The share of young people who have knowledge about consumer rights and household economy should increase.**

The National Board for Consumer Policies has done comparable studies of 1200 secondary school students in nine municipalities 1997 and 2000 in the means to measure the students' educational level. The results show, according to the Board, that the knowledge within the consumer areas is inadequate. The mean value for consumer questions in the latest examination is 54% correct. In 1997, the same value was 56%. The girls have somewhat better results than the boys (55 respectively 53%). The worsening of the results from 1997–2000 can partly be explained by new questions in the examinations. The Board supports the municipal consumer activity which now exists in 240 municipalities. The share of youth who contact consumer guidance is low. The municipal consumer guides spend more and more time on individual economic counselling and debt sanitation which also leads to less time which can be spent on general information to youth in schools and trade life.

*Source The National Board for Consumer Policies.*

## 16.

### **All young people should have real conditions to practise the freedom of expression.**

The right to freedom of expression is one of every citizen's fundamental rights and is written in the constitution's second chapter. There are many different aspects of freedom of expression. The culture sector allows opportunities for youth to express themselves freely in many languages. The National Council for Cultural Affairs has in their report brought forward the possibility for young musicians to meet an audience as a way to make their voices heard. The council reports the young people's representation in decision-making bodies in the means to illuminate the possibility for young people to formally make their voice heard. According to the Council's investigation, it is shown that youth representation is greatest in arranged music and cultural organisations. To shed light on other aspects of freedom of expression, there were several questions about this in the investigation aimed at youth in two municipalities that Temo carried out at the commission of US. The results show that youngsters were of the opinion that they had better chances to express their thoughts and opinions freely in the home and in society in general than in school and the workplace.

*Source: The National Council for Cultural Affairs*

## 17.

### **Young people should not start smoking.**

Fourteen percent of the men and eighteen percent of the women in the age group 16-24 years smoked daily in 1999. Amongst the younger people aged 15-16 were 11 percent of the boys and 17 percent of the girls who smoked daily or as well as daily. The number of youth who smoke has decreased during the 1990's. There are fewer who start smoking and among those who start are more who quit more often. Inquiry results imply that boys start earlier than girls. Society has over a long period in various ways tried to reduce smoking and especially among children and teens. The latest measure in this direction was the ban against selling tobacco to persons under the age of 18 that came in 1997.

*Source: FHI, The National Institute of Public Health*



## 18.

### **Young people's consumption of alcohol should decrease and their debut to alcohol should be postponed.**

Alcohol consumption in the entire population reached a top in 1977. After this the alcohol consumption decreased to its lowest level at the end of the 80's. Since then, the consumption has increased among youngsters of all ages. The debut of alcohol takes place most often in early teens. Boys in grade 9 reveal in inquiries that they drink almost twice as much as the girls, 3.9 litres of pure alcohol for boys and 2.3 litres for girls during 1999. The relation between girls and boys consumption has been about the same during the overall increase during the 1990's. It is not possible to analyse these national figures comparing the different factors of geographic or social and ethnic backgrounds. An alcohol and drug-prevention action plan was accepted where youngsters are indicated as an especially significant target group. A new action plan has been developed and will be brought up in parliament during this spring. Even here, youth are indicated as an especially important target group for different prevention efforts. Sweden's entrance in the EU has changed the conditions for alcoholic politics and has made the need more apparent for evaluation of prevention strategies and development of effective methods for reducing the demand of alcohol.

*Source: FHI, The National Institute of Public Health*

## 19.

**The share of youth who test narcotics should decrease. Long-term goal is that no young people should be using narcotics.**

National data for the use of drugs and attitudes towards drugs in grade level 9 is available since 1971. The share of youth who tried drugs was highest during the 1970's, sank drastically and laid low during the entire 1980's. An increase has begun during the 1990's, but still far under the levels of the 1970's. The share of youth who test drugs has risen consistently during the entire 1990's; behind this trend is probably a relaxed attitude to drugs and even higher availability. In a school investigation 1999, 9 percent of the boys and 7 percent of the girls answered that they had used drugs, mostly cannabis on occasion. The negative change, which has occurred in Sweden during the 1990's, has caused a concern and the newly completed Narcotics commission has given much attention to young people. Despite this somewhat relaxed and media-popular attitude toward drugs, the majority of young people still have a very restrictive attitude towards drugs. In comparison with other European countries, the share of Swedish youth who tries narcotics is at a low level. In their report FHI brings forth the database EDDRA that contains workshop examples from member countries within EU.

*Source: FHI, The National Institute of Public Health*



## 20.

**The share of youth that partake in international youth exchange should increase, through EU's youth program as well as through studies and vocational programs abroad.**

There are many opportunities for young people to participate in different forms of education programs and exchange activities. Most are related to school activities and the area of education. The Swedish National Board for youth Affairs and The International Program Office for Education and Training act as national program offices for special funds set aside to support international youth exchange as a part of EU co-operation. Within the framework of the new exchange program Ungdom, at least 30 percent of the new budget will be used for youth who otherwise would not have the possibility to participate in an international cooperation. The resources acquitted heavily restrict the number of youngsters who have the opportunity to international exchange through the different programs that are operated by these authorities. Resources, which are already utilized to the maximum to make possible exchange at today's level.

## Overall Objective 2

**Young people will have genuine possibilities for influence and participation.**

The youth policy proposition's second objective involves influence and participation. Youth influence should increase in order to avoid exclusion and feeling of outsidership. Youth groups are under-represented in different decision-making bodies, which from a civil rights aspect is wrong. By giving youth influence, society can gain access to valuable ideas, thoughts and knowledge which young people have (SOU 1997:71). In the government's proposition, it is pointed out that youth's influence can not be limited to concern specific areas which are close to their everyday life, for example influence in school through student council or municipal supply of recreation. Influence should besides these obvious, commonplace areas include influence over both community planning and international matters (prop. 1998/99:115).

There are 11 subobjectives under this youth policy objective.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, The International Program Office for Education and Training*

## 21.

### **More students should feel that they have both formal and real influence in school.**

Student's right to influence is expressed distinctly in the schools guidelines. The National Agency for Education investigations over the school picture 1994 and 1997 show that student influence in elementary school grades 7–9 and in secondary school has risen during the 1990's according to the students' opinion. Still, half of the students in secondary school reveal that they can only marginally influence their situation in school (the third study is presented during spring 2001). Student influence differs greatly between schools and between secondary school programs. The relation between teachers' possibilities to have influence over their own working situation and the tendency to openness for students to affect their situation is clear.

Within the traditional school culture are few real conditions to create a forum for educational discussions and dialog to reach concordance in the direction of the school's task. Within both elementary and secondary school, development is moving towards the representative democracy's formality changing to the benefit of a more direct democratic form which are bound to the education and are a natural ingredient in the school's work. In their report, the National Agency for Education brings forth examples of new forums for influence where the goal is for the schools decisions to be delegated. These are connected to specific secondary school programs.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*

## 22.

### **The formal influence of students on the local school shall increase and the work of the student council and student body shall be encouraged.**

The National Agency for Education's report deals with the trial operations with local administrations where the students have the majority in the secondary school. At the moment, 29 schools in a total of 21 municipalities participate in the trial operations. The evaluation of these operations so far shows that those students who are participant experience an increased influence and experience that teachers and principals listen. The amount of time that the trial operations shall go on can seem short. Many have not yet found their working routine.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*



## 23.

**The school should encourage youth involvement and participation in social matters by being an arena where local social matters are discussed and young people's opinions are taken in.**

The National Agency for Education ascertains that the school is an important arena for a citizen competence, which follows the individual throughout life. The National Agency for Education leaves no information that can directly refer to this aimed objective. However, several studies are shown which show a tendency towards students feeling a strong political weakness and miss real influence over their everyday life while at the same time, they are deemed as genuinely democratic and responsible, considerate and loyal as well as showing good sense of justice. The students do not give a powerless impression, but are often open and critical.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*

## 24.

**Students ought to be represented in preparation and decision-making bodies within the university whose activity has importance for the education and the student's situation.**

Today, students have the right through their organisations to perform formal influence on the activities at the university and secondary school through representatives in educational boards and faculty committees etc. The share of informal preparation bodies at the university and secondary school has increased since 1993's university and secondary school reform, and the students have been involved in these increasingly. Student influence has been strengthened further through the proposition which newly was accepted by the parliament and where it is determined that the students should have the right to partake even in preparing bodies within university whose activities have importance for the education and the students' situation. In order to review and give a perspective on how the university and secondary school works to develop student influence in their respective activities, the National Agency for Higher Education initiated an evaluation in 1999. In this work was included the lifting forward of good examples of how one can work as well as bringing forth some educational methods which work most suitably within each area.

*Source: The National Agency for Higher Education*

## 25.

**Municipalities should confirm according to the local conditions and in co-operation with the municipality's youth confirm that youth's right to influence is handled in municipal action plans and similar documents as well as work for making the meaning known to youth.**

According to the SKF inquiry investigation, which was carried out 2000, 49 of 230 replying municipalities have a youth policy objectives document. 15 of these were accepted 1999-2000. Work is taking place in 37 municipalities to bring forth such a document. A positive interpretation means that there is or is planned a youth policy objectives document in 37% of those municipalities who answered the inquiry. 50 of these municipalities (22%) reveal that youth /youth groups have been or are participant in the creating of the document. There are clear differences between the different types of documents. In the gathered material are 15 municipal strategy documents where influence is a constant theme, both in the contents and the creation of the document. To investigate the second part of the objective, knowledge among youth about the contents in action plans and similar documents, questions were asked about this in the National Board for Youth Affairs' pilot study in two municipalities. Knowledge is at a low level overall, with little difference between the sexes and age groups.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities*

## 26.

**Municipalities should work together with the municipality's youth to uphold appropriate forms for continuing dialogue between youth and decision makers, in order to create possibilities for young citizens to exercise influence over the municipal activity planning.**

The yearly mapping which the National Board for Youth Affairs carries out of the share of local influence forum for youth shows that there were 127 youth councils or other forums in 99 municipalities or district committee in 2000, similar figures in 1999 were 84. These forums are mainly aimed to age group between 13 and 18 years, half to youth under 16 years. Distribution of the sexes varies, but girls are often in majority. These forums for influence differ in build up and function. The point is to lay down a youth perspective on local social matters in general. It is important to underline the fact that youth councils cannot be seen as the sole solution to the municipalities' work in strengthening youth influence in the municipalities. Other precautions and efforts are needed, such as involving the youth groups, club activities, and schools in the development of democracy.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs*

## 27.

**All young people should be given opportunities for participation in cultural life and for cultural experiences as well as individual creativity.**

In the absence of separate statistics for the group young people, the National Council for Cultural Affairs points out a reduction of possibilities for young pop and rock musicians to at an early stage meet their home audience, reduction of children's theatres, and fewer are inspired and have possibility to create on their own. The National Council for Cultural Affairs constitutes that the development is going in the wrong direction and mean that the states involvement is important for the spreading of the steering documents' objective descriptions and their integration in activities aimed at youngsters. It is above all in the municipalities where the opportunities are created for youths' cultural activities, but even the regions have important roll in local work. The National Council for Cultural Affairs' judgement is that information, central cooperation, and spreading of good examples are important tools for desirable development in coalition with the part objective.

*Source: The National Council for Cultural Affairs*

## 28.

**The younger generations' cultural inheritance shall be preserved and cultivated.**

The National Council for Cultural Affairs has decided to give an example of this part objective with a description of UKM. In this organisation lie both a broad cultivation of young culture and possibilities of identifying of what this youth generation's special cultural expression and future inheritance could be. A variety of different cultural expressions are gathered in different festivals arranged at the initiative of a province or a municipality. Festivals are arranged where adults with different skills and youth with different cultural interests create an arena for young culture. UKM is an example of how the State can give support to develop collaboration where regional and local levels independently work in a direction coming from local and geographic conditions. The partial goals formulation should be clarified in the future according to the National Council for Cultural Affairs' opinion.

*Source: The National Council for Cultural Affairs*

## 29.

**Young people should have access to suitable meeting places where young people are given influence over the operations.**

SALA mapping of recreation centres showed that there were 1567 recreation centres in 1990, of which circa 20% were run by associations. There were about 1350 in 2000. The heavy reduction has occurred in the municipal centres. The share of centres that are owned and or driven by associations is basically unchanged. It was established that traditional youth clubs have good access to premises in the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs investigation Space to meet. There were differences between major city and smaller areas. A large part of the youth clubs has their premises for free. The conditions for immigrant youths' clubs were worse than for other clubs.

In a hasty inquiry, which SALA carried out in 2000, it appeared that four municipalities had no open recreational activities for teenagers. About half of the municipalities claimed to have such activities for youth in their upper teens and older. There was a large variation between the different municipalities. The types of meeting places had a large impact on the possibility for influence over the meeting places' activity.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs  
SALA, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities*

## 30.

**Youth shall feel encouraged to involve themselves in, renew, and develop club life.**

Support to young people's own organisation is an important part of youth policy. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs distributes state funds to the national youth organisations. These organisations reported before allowance year 2000 overall fully 560000 members in the ages of 7–25 years. Within the objective related allowance system is an ongoing work amongst those state allowance beneficent youth organisations to increase the members' activity. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs' government assignment to support the development of young people's self organisation has made it possible to intensify the work with recreation life which is in conjunction with this subobjective.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs*

## 31.

**Young people should be given the opportunity to partake in official delegations at international conferences where matters of importance for youth are discussed.**

The Cabinet Office and the Ministries has no compiled statistics over the age composition in official delegation at international conferences. All errands of importance for young people and their conditions are however processed by their respective department along with the Youth Policy Unit at the Justice Department. The Youth Policy Unit can act to give young people the opportunities in international conferences in the area that regards youth. The Department of Justice has a continuous dialogue with LSU in these matters which increase the chances for youth organisations to put forth representatives in those cases which it is deemed relevant.

Youth are now present in various relations, for example in the job of creating a European white book about youth policy and in the big WHO-conference about youth and alcohol which was carried out in Stockholm in spring 2001. Youth organisations also have in different ways through LSU had the possibility to act as delegates within UN. LSU has for the time being a dialogue directly with the UD and discussions are carried out to increase young people's opportunities to act in different international relations.

## Overall Objective 3

**Young people's commitment, creative abilities and critical thinking will be utilised as a resource.**

The third guideline objective for youth policy is the resource objective. The ability to take in new ideas, listen to criticism, as well as encourage a variety of opinions and values is important for society's survival and dynamics (SOU 1997:71). In the governments bill, it was emphasized that youth are often interested in and have new knowledge in different matters of the future, for example, IT, environment, and work against racism and hostility to foreigners (prop. 1998/99:115).

Apparently, it has been difficult to follow up these part objectives. Partly because it is sometimes unclear what is involved with utilizing young people as a resource, the part objectives do not always give much guidance. It is partly often a matter of an authority following up its own handling of youth, which is not always done. It is not always determined which authority should have responsibility for what.

In order to complete the following up, the National Board for Youth Affairs has in some places supplemented the authorities' reports with information from its own inquiry survey.

The government has formulated a total of ten subobjectives under the resource objective.

*Source: Cabinet Office and the Ministries*

### 32.

#### **Young people's involvement should be utilized as a resource in the international development collaboration.**

According to Sida's report, it is shown that 75 percent of those age 15–25 state that they think it is important that Sweden subsidizes the development of developing countries and circa 55 percent state that they would like to know more about Swedish subsidies. Sida reports a number of efforts in the means to involve youth in international development work. It involves among other things determined efforts to recruit youth for different forms of international assignment and aid work, Sida also reports a number of efforts that aim.

*Source: Sida*



### 33.

#### **Young people who are involved in and have special skills in environmental issues should be utilized as a resource to a fuller extent.**

The National Environmental Protection Agency has in its report focused on different examples of activities in the purpose to include youth and their involvement within the framework of the National Environmental Protection Agency's own work. The agency gives a broad compilation of concrete examples of activities where youth themselves work actively with matters of sustainable development. The National Environmental Protection Agency emphasizes that the agency in its engagement work is not only meant for youth who are already involved and have special skills, but even those who are not already involved. The agency emphasizes also the importance of working through further informants, teachers in particular, in order to at an early stage stimulate interest in environmental matters within the frame of schoolwork.

*Source: The National Environmental Protection Agency*

### 34.

**Young people's involvement in contributing to integration and fighting racism, discrimination and hostility to foreigners should be utilized as a resource.**

The National Integration Office distributes development funds to different types of projects where youth themselves work against racism and foreign hostility. The majority of the projects are aimed to a target group that is made up of both men and women. The greater part is run in nearby suburbs to the major cities. Circa 40% of all the projects that have been granted aid by the Integrationsverket during 2000 are affected by this part objective. The agency shows examples of different projects that are run in the aim to put a stop to racism in the school. The agency deems that the part objective should be made more distinct and more concrete. The current part objective is, as several other resource goals, more to be seen as a recommendation, which makes it hard to be put into operation and even harder to follow up.

*Source: The National Integration Office*

### 35.

**Young people who have special skills within IT should be utilized as IT supports in the school and share technical expertise to groups that have less abilities.**

The National Agency for Education points out in its report that the matter of how youth with special technical skills can be utilized in teaching is complex. Because a student's technical skills are well developed does not necessarily mean that they are fit to carry the responsibility of teaching others. The National Agency for Education is of the opinion that the objective should be reworded so that it aims at the school's responsibility to catch the students with special IT skills and stimulate their development for example as IT support. The partial goal could in this way explain more clearly that it is the school's responsibility to in different ways utilize students with special IT skills, as a resource of the school on the conditions of the students themselves.

*Source: The National Agency for Education*



## 36.

### **Young people should contribute to the starting up of more companies.**

According to NUTEK's report it is shown that in 1999 26% of the new companies started by persons under 30 years of age. Similar figures for 1998 were 24%. There has thus occurred a small increase from the share being relatively constant during recent years. It is still early to determine if the rise is the beginning of a new trend or just circumstance. The objective to start businesses is more important for immigrants than for those who are born in Sweden. It seems to be more important for men than for women. Concerning motive for starting there are also differences in the sexes. Women emphasize freedom and self-realisation more and money less than men. NUTEK deems that part objective 36 should be made more concrete. This part objective is closely related to the goal fulfillment of part objective 10 and 11. The examples of activities which NUTEK brings forward in their report shows an important support for young entrepreneurs to create networks and other forums for idea exchange and guidance.

*Source: NUTEK, The Swedish Business Development Agency*

## 37.

### **The authorities should determine their long-term upholding of competence through among other things an age structure that coincides with the organisation.**

Many authorities have an unbalanced age distribution with an increasing share over 55 years. During the period up until 2015 an increasing share of employees will be retiring.

The Department of Justice continuously brings in information from SCB and overarching reports from the State Office for Public Administrations. According to the report, it is shown that the share under 30 has decreased by altogether 6% between 1990 and 1999. The share under 25 years was only 3% 1999, the share under 30 circa 9%. The government watches over the authorities work with matters of generation changes and demands information on among other things age structures in conjunction with authorities reporting of upholding competence within the frame of the following up of employer policy.

*Source: Cabinet Office and the Ministries*



### 38.

#### **The share of young members in State committees, boards, and administrations should increase.**

The Cabinet Office and the Ministries compile the yearly age composition in the State central authority administrations and committees. The average age is high in public decision-making bodies and committees. A comparison between the turn of the years 1995/96 and 1998/99 shows that the age composition has not noticeably changed. The dominance of people born in the 1930" and 1940's subsists. The latest report is from 1999. It shows that only 1% of administration members are under 30. The Cabinet Office and the Ministries proposes the question of how widespread the general guidelines for appointed assignments which the government commits can be complemented with formulations which point at the need of a higher share of youth in state authority administration and committees.

*Source: Cabinet Office and the Ministries*

### 39.

#### **The share of young members in different decision-making bodies on the municipal level should increase.**

According to the report it is shown that the median age is about 50 years in the municipal deciding body. The median age has risen 3 years between 1995 and 1999. People between ages 18 and 29 are heavily underrepresented. They only have 6% of the assignments despite the fact that they make up 19% of the voting public. Persons under 30 years of age have only 1% of the ordinary chairman assignments. The age groups representation in different boards varies. The younger are best represented in recreation and culture boards (11%), only 6% of the members in municipal council are under 30 years of age. The share of youth with municipal positions of trust has decreased by 25% between 1995 (8%) and 1999 (6%). The share of women in this group has also decreased from 44% 1995 to 42% 1999. The younger are more inclined to jump off their assignment during the mandate period.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, SALA, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities*

## 40.

### **All youth should have opportunity to personal creativity.**

This part objective is included in part objective 27 and is accounted for there.

*Source: The National Council for Cultural Affairs.*



## 41.

### **Young people's involvement and creative ability should be utilized in efforts to create a meaningful leisure time as well as in different types of preventative activities.**

The objective covers two different parts, recreation activities and preventative work. Both are activities where the municipalities have responsibility for development. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is the State authority that works closest to recreational activities. The authority receives along with the youth policy proposition a particular commission to support the development of local cultural and recreational activities that build upon youths' individual involvement. For different forms of preventative work the brottsförebyggande rådet has left a report of their support to local prevention work and left concrete examples of activities where youngsters' own involvement is utilized in the prevention work, among other things the fellow student support activity in school. The National Institute of Public Health shows its work of involving youngsters in the magazine Glöd, whose purpose is to encourage good psychological and sexual health for boys and girls in their teens and work for a reduced inequality in health. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs works also with the government's assignment in cooperation with a number of pilot municipalities to strengthen the prevention work for youth in risk environments, where the supportive perspective is especially emphasized at work.

*Source: The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, The National Institute of Public Health, The National Council for Crime Prevention*



## Discussion

This is a summary of the first year's follow-up of the national youth policy. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has compiled investigation results and good examples from 15 different authorities to report and analyse youths' living situation and youth policy development work in relation to 41 different sub objectives.

The current objectives have been created through a long-going political process. The National Board for Youth Affairs has based its interpretation of the objective's functions and importance on the different analysis and suggestions that preceded the political decisions in parliament and the government.

Many of the subobjectives leave room for interpretation. Even the different authorities' responsibilities are sometimes hard to decipher. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has made the fundamental judgement that this first year's follow-up makes up an account of how the objectives are received and interpreted by different involved authorities. We have focused on the implementation of the goal structure that the objectives should be known and well received by the different authorities. The National Board for Youth Affairs will not take over the youth related matters from other authorities, for it is important that the objectives are accepted and strived after by as many different actors as possible.

Different functions are discussed in the report which the subobjectives can possibly fill, how they can be used to describe young people's living situation, act as introductory directions for society's obligations and be used to evaluate measures taken. The idea is

that we in following years' follow-ups of the national youth policy can discuss goal structure from other viewpoints and finally gain the opportunity to analyse goal fulfilment in relation to the three guideline objectives more thoroughly in the first in-depth analysis 2003. This first year we have however realized the importance of giving leeway for the different involved authorities to interpret the aim of a new youth policy by objective-steered and in the final report discuss those different subobjectives interpretation more thoroughly.

### **Young people's living situation**

The results which shed light on the fundamental living conditions such as education, employment, health, housing, and possibility of making a living, show that the development is going in the right direction in relation to certain subobjectives, while it is far between young people's reality and the government's objective when it concerns others.

### **School**

In the school area, the report shows that development in many ways is going in the wrong direction. There are for example great shortcomings concerning APU, where 40% of the students still do not receive the education that the secondary school ordinance prescribes. A very serious problem is that the share of students who leave elementary school and secondary school without adequate grades is decreasing instead of increasing. There are clear differences in the sexes and large differences between different youth groups. The differences are also greatest between different secondary school programs and between different municipa-

lities and schools. It is here politically important to continue analysing what is the cause and effect.

### **Labour market**

Young people's situation on the labour market has been improved during later years. Youth unemployment has decreased for example. However, there are still registered long-term unemployed youth who are not involved in political labour market measures. It is quite important to clarify that the 100-day goal is not fulfilled. It is vital to continue to invest especially in the young people who are at the risk of ending up in long-term unemployment to avoid the devastating consequences which long-term unemployment in early years leads to for both the individual and society.

### **Social allowance**

Even the possibility to making a living has evolved positively during the last years. Social allowance dependency has decreased. However, the receiving of social allowance among young people is higher than for other groups in society. The reduction is connected with the sinking unemployment rate. Here, there are great differences within the youth groups. The situation is notably more difficult for youth with non-European background. There are also differences between the sexes when it comes to social allowance dependency, which is important to continue analysing.

### **Housing**

In many municipalities, there is a lacking in the living spaces which young people demand. The situation for students is especially difficult in the major city areas. The

possibility of having personal housing is an important part of becoming an adult and not only in relation to the State's goal for higher education and employment. Therefore, from a political housing standpoint, it can be important to release this subobjective from these objectives in the future.

### **Influence**

That youth should be utilized as a resource and be given influence over society are two fundamental attitudes towards youth that society should have and which parliament has included in the overarching objectives. These objectives will be effective for all authorities. In the subobjectives, certain areas and sectors have been pointed out specifically. One example is youth influence in school where different studies show that students in many ways still feel that they can only affect their situation in limited ways. It is important to follow up the development process in the future.

Analysis of the age representation in deciding bodies shows that young people are heavily misrepresented in decision-making on the state and municipal level. In recent years, the median age has risen both in municipal decision bodies and in state administrations and committees. The share of youth is still higher in municipalities' decision-making bodies than in the State's.

Activities aimed at involving young people and utilizing their involvement as resources in the continuing development process with a number of sectors are going on in both state and municipal areas. To engage youth, both a consciousness and an attitude change towards youth are necessary. There is a need

here for a method-development work with an exchange of experience between authorities and municipalities.

### **The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs proposal**

From the standpoint of this first year's practical experience of the work with the follow-up, the National Board for Youth Affairs has reason to leave a number of suggestions to improve the system managing of the national youth policy.

To lead youth policy, political priority is of importance. It is even important to set realistic goals which are well grounded within the different authorities which will work to reach them. The subobjectives cover a variety of areas that in all their different ways are important aspects of youth living conditions. At the same time, it is obvious that there is a number of areas which are not covered by the current subobjectives, for example the public health area can be mentioned where a new national examination proposal brings up 18 different objectives (SOU 2000:91). One of these is young people's psychological health which has worsened during recent years and which is not included as a youth policy subobjective. Other important questions which are not covered by the subobjectives are for example the expanding class distinction which among others the committee for balancing the welfare books. A balanced sheet for the welfare of the 1990's has pointed out in several of its reflections (e.g. SOU 2000:40) and youths vulnerability for crime which is discussed in UN's international strategy for youth matters (UN 1995).

It is apparently so that a number of important aspects of young people's lives are not captured in the current goal structure. At the same time, it is impossible to cover the entire youth policy field in the form of subobjectives. Even if we limit ourselves to state authorities, there are so many areas that are not found in subobjectives. A large part of the community's different obligations are in different ways more or less related to youngsters. The system of a yearly follow-up would be unmanageable if all these were to fit in.

A number of different proposals are discussed in the report for improving the national youth policy. Here we have summarized these in three points.

#### **More distinctive sub objectives**

The subobjectives are often interpretable in a variety of ways. Someone must make these interpretations and in the current system it is left over to a large extent to the different responsible authorities. This has its advantages and disadvantages. In conclusion, it can be said that the system utilizes the authorities' experiences and initiatives in a good way, but does not give enough guidance where such is needed.

#### **More distinctive distribution of responsibility**

In the youth policy proposition it was said that the intention was for the subobjectives for youth policy to be included in the affected authorities regulation letter for the year 2000 (prop. 1998/99:115 s 33). The government has not reached this point. The National Board for Youth Affairs means that it is of great importance that such happens in the future.

### **More distinctive assignments**

Several of the subobjectives are not clearly connected to a certain operation assignment at a state authority for various reasons. The most important reason is that several of the subobjectives concern the municipal affairs for which there is no state mandate to influence. One example of this is the areas of recreation and culture. The State has certain obligations within these areas, among other things through the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs with different inheritance fund projects, but these projects which for the most part are voluntary can never measure up to the municipal budget within the areas. To be able to fulfil these subobjectives, the state is totally dependent on the municipalities' priorities.

## References

Government decision 10, 1999-12-16. Commissioned by the government to analyse changes in young peoples living conditions related to the objectives of the national youth policy.

SOU\* 1997:71 Bilaga 2. *Jo, så här tycker vi! Inkomna svar från Ungdomspolitiska kommitténs kampanj Vad tycker du?*

SOU\* 2000:40 *Välfärd och försörjning*. Antologi från Kommittén välfärdsbokslut.

SOU\* 2000:91 *Hälsa på lika villkor – nationella mål för folkhälsan*. Slutbetänkande av Nationella folkhälso-kommittén.

Swedish Government Bill 1998/99:115 *On Their Terms*. A youth policy for democracy, justice and belief in the future.

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (1998) *Förslag till delmål för ungdomspolitiken*. Redovisning av regeringsuppdrag Dnr 11-716/97, stencil.

UN (1995) *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond resolution 50/81*.

\*SOU= *Statens offentliga utredningar/ Commission of Inquiry (set up by the government)*.

## The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

The Swedish Parliament's youth policy objectives are that young people in Sweden should be given the pre-requisites to live independent lives, that they should have real influence, and that society should make use of the resources that young people offer. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is a government agency that collaborates with others to achieve these objectives.

- We co-ordinate the follow-up of central and local government initiatives for youth.
- We follow the development, we analyse and we propose measures to improve living conditions for youth.
- We work to encourage regeneration of youth activities organised by local government and organisations.
- We are responsible for the EU programme YOUTH and other forms of international youth co-operation.
- We distribute public funds to youth organisations.
- We supply information and generate public opinion on youth policy issues.
- We provide civic information on our web site Ungdomskanalen (The Youth Channel).

Our target groups are primarily decision-makers and people working with youth issues..



**The Swedish National  
Board for Youth Affairs**

[www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se)