



Summary of
report 2002:5



The Swedish National
Board for Youth Affairs
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Swedish YOUTH 2002

– Second Year Follow-up of the National Youth Policy



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Introduction

For the second year in succession, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has conducted a follow-up of the Swedish youth policy. This year there are 32 new sub-objectives that are presented by 16 government authorities and in co-operation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities.

These authorities include:

International Programme Office for Education and Training
National Agency for Education
National Agency for Higher Education
National Board of Health and Welfare
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
National Council for Crime Prevention
National Institute of Public Health
National Labour Market Board
Swedish Business Development Agency
Swedish Cabinet Office
Swedish Consumer Agency
Swedish Environment Protection Agency
Swedish Integration Board
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs

The three overall objectives that were adopted by Parliament in autumn 1999 remain unchanged:

- Young people will have good conditions for living an independent life.
- Young people will have genuine opportunities for influence and participation.
- Young peoples commitment, creative abilities and critical thinking will be utilised as a resource.

This is a summary of the second year follow-up of the national youth policy.

32 sub-objectives

In autumn 2001, the Government decided to adopt 32 new sub-objectives for the Swedish youth policy. It is these sub-objectives that have served as a basis for the follow-up. In its decision on new sub-objectives, the Government has taken into consideration the proposals made in the first years youth policy follow-up, *Ung 2001*¹. Among other things, the periods of time available for goal fulfilment have been specified. In several sub-objectives, the Government requests analyses of particularly vulnerable groups and some of the sub-objectives have been reformulated to facilitate their interpretation.

1

The proportion of pupils, those with a foreign background as well as those with a Swedish background, who leave comprehensive school with the qualifications necessary for admittance to upper secondary school shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

2

The proportion of pupils, those with a foreign background as well as those with a Swedish background, who leave upper secondary school with full matriculation shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

3

The proportion of pupils who gain places in upper secondary schools in line with their first selection shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

4

The proportion of pupils who receive professional study- and vocational guidance shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

5

The proportion of young people attending school who use the Internet as an instrument in their school work in order to achieve the objectives of the school shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

6

At least 50 per cent of each age group shall commence higher education at a maximum age of 25 over the period 2001–2003.

7

The proportion of unemployed youths under the age of 25 who are offered regular work, suitable education, training or some form of employment-oriented or creative activity shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

¹ Also in English short version as Swedish Youth 2001.

8

The proportion of young people between the ages of 15 and 18 who are given the opportunity of vocational work during the summer for at least three weeks shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

9

The number of young people who have a positive attitude to various forms of business enterprise, and a knowledge of what it involves, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

10

The number of local authorities with a sufficient proportion of housing suitable for young people shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

11

The number of young people who work or study, and who have sufficient solvency to be able to pay the rent for their own accommodation, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

12

The number of young people requiring income support, and particularly those young people with a long-term need for such support, shall decrease over the period 2001–2003.

13

The proportion of young people who, in order to be able to function as critical and knowledgeable consumers, have a knowledge of consumer legislation and home economics shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

14

The number of central and local government measures aimed at giving young people real opportunities to use freedom of speech shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

15

The proportion of young women and men who use tobacco shall decrease over the period 2001–2003.

16

The proportion of young women and men who regularly consume alcohol in some form or another shall decrease, the mean consumption of alcohol among young people shall decrease and the starting age for the consumption of alcohol shall be deferred over the period 2001–2003.

17

The proportion of young women and men who try drugs shall decrease over the period 2001–2003. The long-term objective is that no young people shall use drugs.

18

The proportion of young people who feel that they suffer from mental disorders shall decrease over the period 2001–2003.

19

The proportion of young people who are the victims of crime shall decrease over the period 2001–2003.

20

The proportion of young people who take part in international youth exchange schemes, in the form of both studies and practical activities, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

21

The proportion of young people who feel that they have both a formal and a real influence at school shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

22

The number of local authorities which, in co-operation with the young people living in the local authority, draw up municipal action plans and similar documents that concern the conditions for young people, and who try to make the content of the plans known among young people, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

23

The number of local authorities that draw up object-oriented forms for recurring discussion between young people and decision-makers with the aim of making it possible for young citizens to exert an influence over municipal action planning shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

24

The opportunities for young people to take part in cultural life and the possibilities for own cultural experience as well as for their own creativity shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

25

The proportion of young people, with different social backgrounds, who feel they have access to purpose-oriented meeting places where young people are allowed to exert an influence on the activities shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

26

The proportion of young people, with different social backgrounds, who involve themselves in the work and activities of a society shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

27

The proportion of young people with a foreign background who feel they can take an active part in society with respect to recreation, living, work and education shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

28

The number of official delegations attending international conferences where young people take part, and where questions of importance to young people are discussed, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

29

The proportion of activities within the Swedish Government Offices and the normal activities of the authorities concerned, where the involvement of young people is utilised as a resource, shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

30

The proportion of new companies established by young women and men shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

31

The proportion of young members, both women and men, on Government committees and boards shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

32

The proportion of young members, both women and men, of decision-making bodies at local authority level shall increase over the period 2001–2003.

Summary table

The following table contains an overall assessment of the trend for each sub-objective, whether the target group is over or under majority, which source material was used and which authority was responsible for the follow-up.

Young people will have good conditions for living an independent life

Sub objective	Trend	Target group, over/under majority	Source material	Material from
1	-	-18	Annual statistics	National Agency for Education
2	+/- ²	-18	Annual statistics	National Agency for Education
3	=	-18	Annual statistics	National Agency for Education
4	?	-18	Own survey, work in progress for continuous follow-up	National Agency for Education
5	+	-18	Repeated surveys	National Agency for Education
6	+	18+	Annual statistics	National Agency for Higher Education
7	-	18+	Monthly statistics	Swedish Cabinet Office
8	+	-18	Follow-up of consumption of funds	National Labour Market Board
9	?	-18	Follow-up lacking	Swedish Business Development Agency

² The term "full matriculation" is not used in the Swedish educational field. Two different indicators have been used that shows opposite trends.

Sub objective	Trend	Target group, over/under majority	Source material	Material from
10	-	18+	Annual follow-up	National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
11	?	18+	Follow-up lacking	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
12	+	18+	Ongoing register data	National Board of Health and Welfare
13	=	-18	Own questionnaire surveys	Swedish Consumer Agency
14	?	?	Routines lacking	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs ³
15	+/- ⁴	-18	Annual questionnaire surveys	National Institute of Public Health
16	-	-18	Annual questionnaire surveys	National Institute of Public Health
17	-	-18 ⁵	Annual questionnaire surveys	National Institute of Public Health
18	-	18+	Annual questionnaire surveys	National Institute of Public Health
19	=	-18	Repeated questionnaire surveys	National Council for Crime Prevention
20	=	18+	Annual statistics	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, Int. Programme Office for Education and Training

³ The National Board for Youth Affairs has also received input from the Swedish Cabinet Office.

⁴ The sub-objective applies to the use of tobacco. There has been a decrease in smoking and an increase in taking snuff.

⁵ To a certain extent, this also includes older youths.

Young people will have genuine opportunities for influence and participation

Sub objective	Trend	Target group, over/under majority	Source material	Material from
21	+	-18	Repeated questionnaire surveys	National Agency for Education
22	-	-18	Annual questionnaire surveys	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
23	+	-18	Annual questionnaire surveys	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
24	?	?	Follow-up lacking	Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs
25	-	-18	Follow-up lacking	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
26	=	-18	Ongoing register data	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs
27	?	?	Follow-up lacking	Swedish Integration Board
28	?	18+	Routines lacking	Swedish Cabinet Office

Young peoples commitment, creative abilities and critical thinking will be utilised as a resource

Sub objective	Trend	Target group, over/under majority	Source material	Material from
29	?	? ⁶	Routines lacking	Swedish Cabinet Office, Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, Swedish Integration Board, Swedish Environment Protection Agency, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
30	?	18+	Follow-up lacking	Swedish Business Development Agency
31	-	18+	Annual follow-up	Swedish Cabinet Office
32	-	18+	Surveys performed by others	Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

The proportion of sub-objectives with a positive trend is greatest in connection with the independence objective. Approximately a quarter of these 20 sub-objectives display a positive trend. At the same time, there is a similar proportion with a negative trend. A quarter of the sub-objectives under the independence objective display no clear change, and for a quarter there is no data available on which to base an assessment of the development⁷.

Two of eight sub-objectives under the influence objective display a positive trend and two a negative trend. For three of these sub-objectives there are no reports that can serve as a basis for assessment and in the case of the other sub-objective the situation is stable.

Where there is data available on which to base the trends of sub-objectives under the resource objective, it is moving in the wrong direction.

⁶ The target groups vary in age

⁷ The assessment of trends is based on the time horizon used by the various authorities in their reports. This frequently concerns developments over the course of some two years, but for sub-objective seven it is a question of monthly statistics and for sub-objective 12, a ten-year period.

The living conditions of young people

Education

Young people spend a large part of their everyday lives in a school environment. In addition to acquiring important basic knowledge, they make many new friends and establish important contacts with society outside the family. Surveys performed by the National Agency for Education show that the proportion of pupils with full matriculation has varied between 84 and 79 per cent over the past five years. Girls manage better in comprehensive school than boys, and pupils with a foreign background manage worse than those with a Swedish background. Furthermore, children from families with a high level of education manage better than those who come from families with a low educational level. There are, however, significant differences between local authorities and schools. Pupils from independent schools in general manage better.

The proportion of pupils with basic entry qualifications for university increased last year from an unusually low level. Viewed over a period of two years, the proportion is more constant. In this area too, the same pattern is repeated with respect to differences in gender and foreign background.

The proportion of pupils accepted for their first study choice has remained

relatively stable during recent years at approximately 80 per cent. Here there are clear differences in gender. Those pupils with a foreign background have found it somewhat more difficult to gain entry. The proportion accepted for their first study choice differs significantly between different programmes. It was easiest to be admitted on the science programme, where 90 per cent of those with science as a first choice were admitted, and most difficult to be admitted on the handicraft programme, where 46 per cent of those with handicraft as a first choice were admitted.

Some 40 per cent began a course of higher education before the age of 25 during the academic year 2000/2001. For women, the figure was 47 per cent and for men 34 per cent. We have no details on how large a proportion of students with a foreign background apply for and complete courses of higher education.

In general, we see the picture of a school in which Swedish girls from families with a high level of education do well.

The National Agency for Education has analysed why young people with a foreign background do not do better at comprehensive school. According to the results of the analysis, one reason could be insufficient abilities in the

Swedish language due to their limited time of residence, lack in earlier education and insufficient support from parents. This places heavy demands on schools to rapidly educate new arrivals in Swedish so that they can take part in the learning process. It also appears to be the case that the development towards a more differentiated school is having both a positive and a negative impact. Pupils from independent schools cope better than those from municipal schools.

Labour supply

The unemployment experienced during the first half of the 1990s mostly affected young people, immigrants, women and those with a low level of education. However, young people, and in particular young men, recovered better after the period of crisis. Those with an upper secondary school education, especially with a vocational bias, found it easier to gain a foothold on the labour market towards the end of the 1990s.

A person with a weak position on the labour market runs the risk of ending up in a vulnerable position within society. As a consequence of the improved economy, the short-term income support (1–3 months) has dropped and is now on a lower level than it was in 1990. The long-term dependence did not increase as rapidly during the recession in the 1990s but did not drop as quickly afterwards either. Calculated since 1990, the long-term income support is clearly higher today. This could be an indication that the group includes other serious problems apart from unemployment.

Foreign citizens, and in particular those born abroad, are heavily over-represented among those receiving income support, but are not the largest group numerically. The most common receivers of support in age groups up to 29 are single persons aged 18–21 with no children.

Unemployment is one of the most important reasons for requiring income support. In order to gain access to unemployment insurance, you have to have worked for at least six months. This is particularly hard on young people who have not yet managed to establish themselves on the labour market.

It is of crucial importance to reduce unemployment among young people. The National Board of Health and Welfare, for example, points out that unemployment is a risk factor for various forms of ill health, and the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning states that appointments over a limited period of time and with lower incomes affect the employees' chances to move into their own house or flat. Those people who find it most difficult to establish themselves on the labour market are young people with a low standard of education and who have a working class or immigrant background. It is in particular those people with a non-European background who run a significant risk of falling outside society unless suitable measures are created to provide them with access to the labour market. This affects two of the sub-objectives directly and several others indirectly.

Housing

Shortage of housing is a growing problem in cities and university towns. During the period 1999 to 2001, the number of local authorities with housing shortages for young people increased from 97 to 106. In many of the local authorities in metropolitan regions the lack of suitable housing for young people coincides with a general shortage of housing. In other local authorities that suffer from housing shortages, the shortage affects young people. Of those local authorities that suffer from a shortage of housing for young people, 45 per cent feel that it is the housing costs that are the greatest problem. Almost as many state problems other than housing costs as being the main problem, and claim that the real problem is the overall shortage of housing. A larger proportion of young people stayed living in their parents' homes in 2000 compared with the situation ten years previously. The proportion of young people in the 20-24 age group increased from 30 per cent in 1990 to 36 per cent in 2000.

The lack of student accommodation is linked with the expansion of universities and institutes of higher education during recent years. In 2001, there were some 330 000 university students and 63 400 student apartments.

Health and exposure to crime

The use of tobacco has during recent years been most extensive among adults. During 2001, 7 per cent of the boys and 12 per cent of the girls in academic year

9 in schools stated that they smoked on a daily basis. The drop in the number of smokers among young people started in the 1970s.

The use of snuff is considerably more common among boys than among girls, but is increasing among both sexes. In 2001, 27 per cent of the boys and 5 per cent of the girls in academic year 9 took snuff.

Looked at in a European comparison, Swedish youths in academic year 9 consume very little alcohol. However, during the latter part of the 1990s their consumption increased so that among boys it is on the same level as at the end of the *mellanöl* (medium-strength beer) period (1977). The consumption among boys, measured in terms of 100 per cent pure alcohol per year, increased by 2.7 litres in 1989 to 4.9 litres in 2000, and consumption among girls from 1.5 to 2.7 litres over the same period.

The use of drugs by Swedish young people is also very low in a European comparison. Ninety per cent of all pupils in academic year 9 classes have never taken drugs. Since the end of the 1980s, however, there has been an increase in the use of drugs.

The majority of youths aged 16–24 consider the state of their mental health to be good. Nevertheless, this group accounts for the largest increase in self-reported ill health during the 1990s. The proportion of young people who report problems with insomnia, slight nervousness, worry or anxiety has more than doubled since the end of the 1980s. Women are reporting more problems whereas the rate of increase is higher among men. Men with a salaried em-

ployee background report the lowest number of symptoms and women with a business enterprise and working-class background the highest number of symptoms. In addition, there are links between more serious mental problems and attempted suicides. In Sweden, it is calculated that 1 500–2 000 young people attempt to commit suicide each year. Some 10 per cent of these attempts result in death. For men aged 15–44, suicide is the most common cause of death, while for women in the same age group it is the second most common cause.

The proportion of pupils in year 9 who are susceptible to theft, threats and serious violence remained relatively constant throughout years 1995, 1997 and 1999. In 1999, some 32 per cent were the victims of theft, 10 per cent were subjected to threats and 6 per cent to serious violence. Boys were more often victims than girls. Those individuals with an immigrant background were more often victims than those with an entirely Swedish background, and those with a working-class background more often than those from salaried employee families. Pupils from split families are more susceptible to such crimes than those who live with both parents.

Influence and involvement

The proportion of pupils who say that they can be involved in making decisions at school increased between 1993/1994 and 2000. The largest changes occurred between 1993/1994 and 1997. A greater proportion of girls than boys felt that they could be involved

in the decision-making process. The National Agency for Education also reports that trials in connection with local boards with a pupil majority have been extended until the end of 2003. Of all upper secondary and municipal adult education schools, 40 schools – or 4 per cent – are taking part in the trials.

The National Board for Youth Affairs investigates on a continuous basis whether the country's local authorities have overall sectoral goal and strategy documents for youth policy work. In 2001, a total of 46 local authorities responded that they had a document of this type, which is a somewhat lower figure than the 49 local authorities from the previous year. A small majority of the document concerned both the target group children and the target group youths. Many of them had sought the assistance of other young people when they prepared their document.

The number of municipal forums encouraging the influence of young people amounted in 2001 to 136. The number has increased every year since the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs started its registrations in 1998, when there were 117 forums. The most common age of the participants was between 13 and 18, 57 per cent were girls and 43 per cent boys.

In 2000, there were some 1 350 youth clubs, and in 1990 there were 1 567. The proportion of municipally-owned youth clubs has decreased while the number of clubs run by associations has increased somewhat. Boys are more frequent and regular visitors than girls. Children and young people from the

working class are more frequent visitors than those from the upper and medium classes.

The average age of Government board members has not changed very much during recent years. It was approximately 53 in 2000/2001 and 54 in 1998/1999. The average age of committee members was approximately 53 in 2000/2001 and 52 in 1998/1999. Scarcely 1 per cent of the members were under the age of 30.

A third, 34 per cent, of all persons holding municipal positions of trust and who were between the ages of 18 and 29 left their positions during the first two years of their terms of office. The people who resigned their posts decreased with increasing age. In the age groups 60–69, the resignation rate was some 9 per cent. Women left their posts more often than men. The resignations are explained above all by private reasons: 64 per cent quote private reasons for their resignations and 18 political. Others cite a combination of private and political reasons. The most common private reason is gainful employment, with moving as the second most common reason. Even before these resignations, the number of young people holding positions of trust was low, 6 per cent, and the proportion had also dropped since the elections in 1995, when the proportion was 8 per cent.

Differences between various groups

In general, the conditions for Swedish young people are good. But there are clear differences between various groups of young people in several areas. This year's follow-up shows that there are differences between young people as a result of gender, country of birth, and geographical and social background. This is most evident in the report published by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which indicates that in particular young people with a non-European background run the risk of falling outside the labour market. Exactly when, where and how action will be taken to improve their chances is a difficult question to which the follow-up is unable to provide any clear answers. But we can nevertheless see certain indications of various measures. The report presented by the National Agency for Education shows that those who were born abroad often have a bad start at school unless they have had equivalent schooling in their home countries. Above all, it is difficult for them to catch up, because they have the common extra task of first having to learn Swedish. The National Institute of Public Health and the National Council for Crime Prevention emphasise the importance of social background in managing to avoid being subjected to crime and for protecting mental health.

The unemployment during the first half of the 1990s affected primarily young people, immigrants, women and people with a low standard of education. However, young people, and in particular young men, made a faster recovery after the unemployment crisis. Those with an upper secondary school education, particularly with a vocational emphasis, found it easier to gain a foothold on the labour market at the end of the 1990s. A weak position on the labour market entails a risk of ending up in a socially vulnerable position. In order to be able to gain access to unemployment insurance, you must have worked for at least six months. This hits young people who have not had time to establish themselves on the labour market particularly hard. Unemployment is therefore one of the most important reasons why income support is needed.

The latest unemployment statistics once again indicate increasing unemployment among young people. This has a direct effect on two of the youth policy sub-objectives and an indirect effect on several others where it is of crucial importance for unemployment to be reduced. The National Board of Health and Welfare points out that unemployment is a risk factor for various forms of ill health, and the Na-

tional Board of Housing, Building and Planning that appointments for a limited period of time and lower incomes affect people's chances of being able to move into own houses or flats. Those people who find most difficulty in establishing themselves on the labour market are young people with a low standard of education and a working class and/or immigrant background. It is in particular those individuals with a non-European background who run the greatest risk of falling outside society unless society takes suitable measures to allow such groups to be able to enter the labour market.

Best practices

The development of work in connection with best practices is part of the youth policy system for management by objectives and the follow-up of results, and is closely related to objectives and sub-objectives. The National Board for Youth Affairs has identified three different functions for the national youth policy sub-objectives:

- they can be used to describe young people's living conditions,
- they can be used as guidelines for the action to be taken by society, and
- they can be used to evaluate the measures taken.

In Government Bill 1998/99:115, best practices are described as an instrument for showing what the youth policy means. While follow-up provides answers to the degree of goal attainment, best practices give answers to the kind of approach to be adopted in order to attain the objectives.

Best practices are in the first instance a way of implementing the national youth policy by illustrating a variety of local activities. The national policy is prescriptive for the Government and advisory for local authorities. The local authorities are responsible for many of the questions that have a direct bearing on young people. Youth policy in municipalities is based on the individual perspectives of the various municipalities concerned. The long

experience of the National Board for Youth Affairs concerning continuous contact with the country's local authorities indicates a demand for both accumulated knowledge and an exchange of experience regarding the situation and living conditions faced by young people. One basic precondition if the youth policy is to be successful is for the local authorities to regard their youth policies as being important. The work involved in disseminating best practices is an informative means of control that lacks the element of compulsion.

It is the opinion of the National Board for Youth Affairs that best practices should also illustrate efforts that are made on the part of central government. The efforts of Government authorities can provide inspiration for ideas and new approaches, but at the same time give a more complete picture of various activities that complement each other in the youth policy. One example of this is the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, Sida, which has set up a working group tasked with introducing the youth perspective into its own operations. Another example is the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, which has no form of operative role with respect to the local authorities, but which this year has been tasked, via its website, with creating a bank for the exchange of experience between local authorities. Here it is possible to obtain descriptions

of how different local authorities have chosen to deal with their housing supply, for example young people's housing needs. By clarifying activities and how they are to be implemented within both local and central government operations in the same way as within the EU (for example the recently adopted White Paper on a European youth policy), the youth policy is given substance. Furthermore, the objectives of the youth policy could be a change management task based on different perspectives and sectoral areas.

A network has been established between the authorities in which the National Board for Youth Affairs serves as the co-ordinating body. The purpose of the network is to create a spirit of community in connection with youth policy by exchanging experience on how to develop work with best practices linked to respective sub-objectives. Furthermore, the authorities intend the network to serve as a forum for the work associated with follow-up, the creation of a knowledge bank on young people, information between the local authorities and the opportunity, within the operational planning of each authority, to identify forms of co-operation, for example conferences.

The best practices, or case studies, are published on the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs' website:

www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se

From sub-objectives and operational examples, the reader can continue via a link to the respective authority. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs' website will only present those best practices that are reported in connection with the annual follow-up.

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.



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