



**Youth**Partnership

# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN SWEDEN



Last updated : 27/02/2008

**Youth**Partnership  
Council of Europe  
European Commission



c/o Council of Europe :: Directorate of Youth and Sport :: F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France  
Fax: (33) 3 88 412 778 :: E-mail: youth-partnership@coe.int :: [www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)

## Table of contents

1. Statistics on young people .....	3
2. Actors and Structures .....	3
2.1 Public authorities .....	3
2.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors) .....	6
2.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field .....	7
2.4 Other structures.....	8
3. Legislation.....	8
3.1 Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly.....	8
3.2 National legislation on youth .....	8
3.3 Regional and local legislation on youth .....	8
3.4 Guidelines or principles concerning youth policy if there is no special legislation on this field.....	8
4. National Programmes on youth .....	9
4.1 Name and describe the national programmes on youth.....	9
4.2. Action plans i.e. official strategies .....	10
4.3 Programmes and actions for specific target groups .....	10
5. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth .....	11
5.1 National level.....	11
5.2 Regional level.....	11
6. European Dimension of youth policy.....	11
6.1 Council of Europe programmes or activities implemented in an important way for .....	11
6.2 European Union programmes .....	12
7. Forthcoming events/conferences .....	12
7.1 Current developments/plans with regard to national legislation/guidelines .....	12
7.2 Current developments/plans with regard to European youth policy priorities .....	12

## 1. Statistics on young people

2 069 182 young people aged 13 – 30 live in Sweden<sup>1</sup>. This is 22.7 percent of the total population. Of these, 1 009 853 are women (11.1 percent of the total population) and 1 059 329 men (11.6 of the total population).

## 2. Actors and Structures

### 2.1 Public authorities

#### 2.1.1 National public authorities

##### Ministry in charge of youth

Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (*Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet*)

Contact details: Fredsgatan 8, 103 33 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 405 10 00.

E-mail: [registrator@integration.ministry.se](mailto:registrator@integration.ministry.se). Website: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>

Minister: Ms. Nyamko Sabuni

Duration of mandate: 4 years

##### Youth Department in the Ministry

The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality is responsible for the coordination of the Government's youth policy, issues affecting youth organisations and international cooperation in the youth field. Nine people work in the Division for Youth Policy.

Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry:

Director Annica Dahl, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Division for Youth Policy.

E-mail: [registrator@integration.ministry.se](mailto:registrator@integration.ministry.se).

Contact person in the Division for Youth Policy competent for European youth policy:

Director Annica Dahl, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Division for Youth Policy.

E-mail: [registrator@integration.ministry.se](mailto:registrator@integration.ministry.se).

##### Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

The Swedish youth policy approach is cross-sectoral. Several ministries are responsible for policy areas that concern young people, such as work, education, health, housing, culture, etc. Normally certain responsibilities will also be delegated to one or more government agencies within each policy area. For a more detailed description of the different policy areas please refer to the Government's website <http://www.sweden.gov.se>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Sweden (<http://www.scb.se>). Figures dated 31 December 2006.

The Swedish National Board of Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is the government agency responsible for the follow up of the objectives set for the national youth policy by the Swedish Parliament. The Board produces and communicates knowledge about young people's living conditions and supports municipalities in the development and implementation of local youth policy. It also distributes funds to and supports methods development in young people's leisure and associative activities and in international youth cooperation.

Contact details: Box 17 801, 118 94 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 566 219 00.

E-mail: [info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se](mailto:info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se). Website: <http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>

The main duty of the Children's Ombudsman (*Barnombudsmannen*) is to promote the rights and interests of children and young people (up to the age of 18) as set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The current Ombudsman is Ms. Lena Nyberg. Sweden has implemented the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is giving regular reports on its development to the UN.

Contact details: Box 22106, 104 22 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 692 29 50.

E-mail: [barnombudsmannen@bo.se](mailto:barnombudsmannen@bo.se). Website: <http://www.bo.se>.

Other public bodies that have relevance for youth policy are among others the The National Labour Market Administration (<http://www.ams.se>), The Swedish National Agency for Education (<http://www.skolverket.se>), The Swedish National Institute of Public Health (<http://www.fhi.se>), The Swedish Arts Council (<http://www.kulturradet.se>) and The Swedish Consumer Agency (<http://www.konsumentverket.se>).

### **Parliament commission in charge of youth issues**

In the parliamentary committees the members of the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) prepare all decisions. The composition in each committee reflects the one of the parliament as a whole. After a committee has presented its proposal the members of the parliament adopt a position on the proposal. Youth issues are prepared in different committees depending on the specific issue.

The committee of Cultural Affairs (*Kulturutskottet*) prepares matters concerning culture, education and popular adult education, youth activities, international cultural cooperation and sport and leisure activities. Siv Holma is president of the commission.

The committee of Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottet*) prepares matters concerning care and welfare services for children and young people except for pre-school activities and care services for schoolchildren. Kenneth Johansson is president of the commission.

The Committee on the Labour market (*Arbetsmarknadsutskottet*) prepares matters concerning labour market, and working life including labour law. The Committee also considers matters concerning

integration and discrimination and equality between women and men, insofar as these matters do not fall to any other committee to prepare. Catharina Elmsäter-Svärd is president of the commission.

For more information please refer to: <http://www.riksdagen.se>

### **2.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

Sweden has 20 county councils/regions (18 counties and two regions) with competences in fields relevant for youth. They have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. The main task of the county councils/regions is health care. Some of the county councils/regions have, or have the last years had, specific projects for young people. One example of a regional youth project is Young Thought (*Unga tankar*) in Region Skåne. It's a discussion forum for young people and politicians in the region.

For more information please refer to: <http://www.skl.se>.

In every county in Sweden there is a county administrative board. This board is a government agency that represents the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) and Government in the county. It is the job of the county administrative board to see that the decisions taken by the Government and the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) have the best possible effects in that county. Among issues related to youth policy are gender equality and supervision of the social service sector.

For more information please refer to: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>

### **2.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

Sweden has 290 municipalities with local governments. There is no hierarchical relation between the municipalities and the regional public authorities. The local authorities have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. The municipalities are responsible for: water and sewerage, schools, spatial planning and building, health and environmental protection, refuse collection and waste disposal, rescue services, social services and security. Voluntary activities are: recreation activities, culture, housing, energy, industrial facilities and employment. Many decisions that concern young people are taken at municipal level. Youth policy goals established by the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) are requirements for the central government but only advisory for the municipalities. Youth policy in municipalities can, if the municipalities wish so, start from the national objectives but the way it is executed in practice is shaped on the basis of local conditions. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) supports municipalities in the development of local youth policy and provides funds for local projects.

For more information please refer to:

- The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs <http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>
- The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) <http://www.skl.se>

## 2.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)

In the Budget Bill for 2008 the Government presented two goals for the national youth policy:

- Young people are to have genuine access to influence
- Young people are to have genuine access to welfare

Welfare issues are an important part of Swedish youth policy. The youth policy goal concerning young people's access to welfare focuses on young people's possibilities of achieving a good living standard in material, social and cultural terms. It is about their formal right to a good living standard, but even about their *real* possibilities to achieve a good living standard.

Young people have access to the general public welfare system, meaning that they should be treated on equal terms with others and that their needs should be considered in every area of the welfare system. This concerns for example local social services offices and local health centres. There are however certain services that are targeted more specifically at young people. One example is financial aid for studies, which enables pupils/students to fund their education. Another is young people's clinics (*Ungdomsmottagningar*), local offices where young people seek advice on questions related to physical, mental and sexual health. Many of these are even accessible via the Internet.

The public sector provides most of the basic welfare services for young people. However, non governmental organisations provide important supplements in several areas. The Swedish Red Cross (*Röda Korset*) (<http://www.redcross.se>) and Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda Barnen*) (<http://www.rb.se>) are two major voluntary organisations with several projects on national and local level working with, for example, young criminals, young refugees and vulnerable young people.

Major governmental actors are:

- The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (*Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet*) is responsible for the coordination of the Government's youth policy, issues affecting youth organisations and international cooperation in the youth field.  
Contact details: Fredsgatan 8, 103 33 Stockholm. Tel. + 46 8 405 10 00  
E-mail: [registrator@integration.ministry.se](mailto:registrator@integration.ministry.se). Website: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>.
- The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is the government agency responsible for the follow up of international, national and local youth policy.  
Contact details: Box 17 801, 118 94 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 566 219 00  
E-mail: [info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se](mailto:info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se). Website: <http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) is a government agency responsible for following up e.g. the fields of social services, health and medical services and environmental health.

Contact details: Rålambsvägen 3, 106 30 Stockholm. Tel. +46 75 247 30 00

E-mail: [socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se). Website: <http://www.socialstyrelsen.se>.

- The Swedish National Institute of Public Health (*Statens folkhälsoinstitut*) is a government agency responsible for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of national public health policy. It is as well a national centre of knowledge for the development and dissemination of methods and strategies in the field of public health.

Contact details: Forskarens väg 3, 831 40 Östersund. Tel. +46 63 19 96 00

E-mail: [info@fhi.se](mailto:info@fhi.se). Website: <http://www.fhi.se>.

## **2.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

### **2.3.1 Youth councils**

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*), is a coordinating body for almost 100 Swedish youth organisations. It aims at constituting a forum for matters of common interest in youth organisations and providing a network for national as well as international organisations dealing with youth cooperation.

Contact details: Gammelgårdsvägen 38-42, 112 64 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 672 6670

E-mail: [info@lsu.se](mailto:info@lsu.se). Website: <http://www.lsu.se>.

Youth Councils of Sweden (*Sveriges Ungdomsråd*) is an umbrella organisation for local youth councils. The organisation is both a network that acts as intermediary between local youth councils that are members of the organisation and it works with strategies to develop the skills of its members.

Contact details: Box 510, 351 06 Växjö. Tel +46 73-390 25 51.

E-mail: [kontakt@sverigesungdomsrad.se](mailto:kontakt@sverigesungdomsrad.se). Website: <http://www.sverigesungdomsrad.se>.

The municipalities (290 in total) are responsible for a broad range of policy areas concerning young people. In many of the municipalities, structures for young people's participation and influence exist. These structures are forums for dialogue between young people and municipal decision makers, but how they are organised and which themes they focus on varies from municipality to municipality. The forums might be named e.g. youth councils, youth forums, youth delegations or youth parliaments. Some of them promote their own questions, others have an advisory function to politicians and civil servants, some function as a formal referral body and some might have all or several of these functions. In a poll from 2006 51 % of the municipalities of Sweden responded that they had youth forums<sup>2</sup>.

For a list of local structures for participation and influence please refer to:

<http://forum.ungdomstorget.se>

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: Young today 2007:83, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs.

### **2.3.2 Youth NGOs**

The largest and – in this context – most relevant youth NGOs are members of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*).

### **2.4 Other structures**

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has established a consultative group with youth researchers. The members are experienced and highly qualified representatives from the research community, covering the fields of health, education, youth participation/democracy and integration.

## **3. Legislation**

### **3.1 Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly**

Sweden does not have specific youth legislation apart from the legislation regulating governmental funding for youth organisations.

### **3.2 National legislation on youth**

Sweden does not have specific youth legislation apart from the legislation regulating governmental funding for youth organizations. Matters regarding youth are integrated in other areas of legislation. The Convention of the Rights of the Child serves as a basis for legislation concerning children up to 18 years.

### **3.3 Regional and local legislation on youth**

Sweden does not have specific youth legislation apart from the legislation regulating governmental funding for youth organizations.

### **3.4 Guidelines or principles concerning youth policy if there is no special legislation on this field**

In December 2004 the Swedish parliament adopted a bill on national youth policy, “The Power to Decide – The Right to Welfare” (*Makt att bestämma – rätt till välfärd*). The bill introduced two overarching goals and five policy areas in which the Government would focus its efforts.

In the Budget Bill for 2008 the Government specified the following two goals for the national youth policy:

- Young people are to have genuine access to welfare
- Young people are to have genuine access to influence

The youth policy approach is still cross-sectoral. This means that within each area of politics that touches upon youth related topics, visible efforts should be made to integrate the youth policy perspective within the already existing goals of that specific political area. To fulfil these two main goals, analysis, coordination and presentation should be made within the following five areas:

- Education and training
- Work and self-support
- Health and vulnerability
- Influence and representation
- Culture and leisure-time

Different aspects of the living conditions of young people are not easy to formulate as measurable goals and hence should not be formulated as goals. However, young people's living conditions should be important starting points for how public services are planned and used as points of reference when these services are being evaluated. The Government sees four perspectives that should characterize both the policy and public services for young people. These are the resource perspective, the rights perspective, the independence perspective and the diversity perspective.

Government agencies in charge of different policy areas have to follow up youth related issues as an integrated part of their ordinary follow up of their field of work. A number of youth policy relevant indicators have however been identified in different policy areas such as work, education, housing, health, etc. These are to be reported each year to the responsible ministry and to the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. The reports are compiled and analysed by the Board in a yearly report to the Government on the situation of young people in Sweden. Furthermore, the Board even produces a yearly in-depth study focusing on one specific youth policy field such as health, work, disadvantaged youth, etc.

## **4. National Programmes on youth**

### **4.1 Name and describe the national programmes on youth.**

The Government has launched initiatives to improve the situation of young people in a number of areas. In the Budget Bill for 2008 the Government highlights specific measures within the fields of:

- Education (e.g. improved quality, individual adaptation of education, new structure)
- Employment (e.g. financial incentives for employers to hire young workers – “*the New start jobs*” (*Nystartjobb*), support for unemployed young people such as education and internships as well as support and follow-up in the job searching process – “the Job guarantee” (*Jobbgaranti*))
- Housing (e.g. government subsidies to stimulate municipal support for young people)

- Influence/representation (e.g. better representation of young people in the boards of governmental agencies and in governmental committees)
- Health (e.g. improved competences within health services for youth, improved child/youth psychiatry, development of virtual young people's clinic, action plan on honour-related violence and oppression against young women, efforts to strengthen the physical and mental health of young women)
- Culture (a strategy for strengthening child and youth culture, e.g. by stimulating joint school/culture initiatives)

The government will give priority to measures and efforts aiming at preventing social exclusion of young people. Education and employment are two other focal areas in the Budget Bill; these three are deeply connected to each other.

#### **4.2. Action plans i.e. official strategies**

Within each of the areas referred to over, specific strategies have been or will be developed.

#### **4.3 Programmes and actions for specific target groups**

During the last years, actions for specific target groups have been initiated in several areas. Some examples are:

- The Government has introduced a gender equality effort with focus on girls and young women's physical and mental health for 2007-2009. The National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) in consultation with the county administrations is monitoring a project with the aim to support and educate voluntary organisations in their work against honour-related violence and oppression. The National Board for Youth Affairs and the youth website Lunarstorm have developed a virtual help site where young women can discuss issues concerning relations and gender equality including the issue of honour-related violence and oppression.
- A comprehensive labour market project for young people is conducted in several municipalities. Local resource centres have been set up in which resources from different actors such as public authorities, the private sector and NGOs are put together to facilitate the entrance for young, unemployed people into the labour market. The project is a part of an investment to break young people's exclusion on the labour market and it is managed by The National Board for Youth Affairs. Young people's entrance to the labour market is even one of the Government's priority areas in the European Social Fund in Sweden.
- The project "Prevention and Promotion" (*Förebyggande och främjande*), aims at preventing the social exclusion of young people. Main activities are: developing the competences of youth workers, developing the quality of local youth work, establishing meeting places and activities for

disadvantaged young people. From the end of 2007 focus will be on the training of youth workers and on stimulating networks of organisations and others working in this field. The project is monitored by The National Board for Youth Affairs.

## **5. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth**

### **5.1 National level**

The situation of young people is affected by a wide range of policy areas in the Government's Budget Bill such as education, employment, culture, health, etc. Listing them all, and specifying those parts related to youth only, is beyond the frame of this paper.

In December 2006, the Parliament (*Riksdagen*) took its decision on the central government budget for 2007. The Youth Policy area received 20.5 million Euros: 9 million Euro to the project "Prevention and Promotion", 7.7 million Euros as state grant to youth organisations, 2 million Euros for the National Board for Youth Affairs, 0.3 million Euros to the Young and Active in Europe programme, 0.6 million Euros to youth policy development in municipalities, 0.5 million Euros to the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations and other national structures in the youth field and 0.2 million Euros to youth research, the All different – All equal campaign, and other projects in the youth policy area.

### **5.2 Regional level**

N/I

## **6. European Dimension of youth policy**

### **6.1 Council of Europe programmes or activities implemented in an important way for youth purposes (including funding schemes of the European Youth Foundation)**

The Council of Europe's campaign All Different – All equal (*Alla olika - alla lika*) in Sweden was initiated by young people. The campaign's focus areas is discrimination based on sex, religion, sexual preference, functional disability and ethnicity. The coordinating actor in Sweden is the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*). There have been several activities during the campaign. One example is a discussion festival held for young people in spring 2007. During the autumn a school tour has been conducted where youth organisations educate young people about human rights and raise discussions on the themes discrimination and social inclusion. The final international event of the campaign called "*The End of the Beginning*" was held in Malmö, Sweden the 4-7 of October 2007. The campaign continues in Sweden until 2009.

## **6.2 European Union programmes**

The European Youth in Action programme (*Ung och aktiv i Europa*) consists of Youth for Europe (*Ung i Europa*), European Voluntary Service (*Europeisk volontärtjänst*), Youth in the World (*Ung i världen*), Youth Support Systems (*Ungdomsledare och stödstrukturer*) and European cooperation in the youth field (*Stöd till europeiskt politiskt samarbete*).

The National Board for Youth Affairs is the national agency for the Youth in Action programme in Sweden and is responsible for its implementation. From the first of January 2008 the Board will even be the national agency for Eurodesk.

For more information please refer to:

<http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>

<http://www.eurodesk.org/>

## **Other EU programmes implemented in an important way for youth purposes**

The programme "Lifelong learning" (*Programmet för Livslångt lärande*) comprises sectoral programmes on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig), and is complemented by transversal measures and an additional Jean Monnet programme focusing on European integration.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training (*Internationella programkontoret*) is the national agency for the Lifelong learning-program in Sweden.

For more information please refer to:

<http://www.programkontoret.se>

## **7. Forthcoming events/conferences**

### **7.1 Current developments/plans with regard to national legislation/guidelines**

The youth policy priorities presented in the Budget Bill for 2008 are education, social inclusion and self-support for young people. In the education and employment sector the government has presented several extensive projects and emphasize the connection between the three focus areas.

For more information about the Budget Bill for 2008 please refer to:

<http://www.sweden.gov.se>

### **7.2 Current developments/plans with regard to European youth policy priorities**

The Swedish Government gives priority to education, social inclusion and self-support as well as promotes youth participation in its efforts to achieve the two goals for the national youth policy (young people are to have genuine access to welfare and genuine access to influence). In the fields of

education and self-support/employment, the Government has – as mentioned above – presented several extensive projects. The Government's efforts to stimulate young people's influence and participation in society will focus on the role of the youth organisations offering an arena for voluntary engagement in areas important for young people as well as tools for influence and participation in society. The state grant to the youth NGOs provides the youth organisations with financial resources for this work. Furthermore, the National Board for Youth Affairs promotes and supports youth participation in the municipalities. This is done by supporting networks of municipalities and youth organisations/youth councils working in this field, surveying and promoting good examples and providing financial support to local projects.