



Education **for a good life**

**TCOs ideas for higher education
2008**



Tco

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Foreword

Does anyone believe that Sweden can be more competitive if its workforce is less well-educated? I have not met anyone who has answered this question in the affirmative.

In a global economy exposed to harsh competition, well-educated people and research are prerequisites for sustainable growth. This involves attaining greater productivity, preserving and enhancing welfare, and deepening democracy. High-quality education has become society's most valuable asset. But education is also central to the individual. The individual profits from education by less risk of unemployment and more opportunities to participate actively in building society.

The general level of education in Sweden has been raised successively. These higher ambitions have been questioned continuously but over time have shown themselves to have served Sweden well. Now it is time to take the next step. A modern knowledge-based society cannot say "No" to people who want to study.

A modern educational system is open to many and delivers high-quality education. Modern higher education stimulates creativity and independence. This is and shall remain a hallmark of Swedish higher education. The educational system is key to the future shape of the labour market, which jobs will be created, and which sectors will be pre-eminent.

Sweden needs to invest more in higher education. Because society needs it. Because more people should have the opportunity to fulfil their dreams. Because the quality of that education should be world class. Sweden shall remain a knowledge-based nation of the highest order.

Our sincerest thanks to TCO's Education Committee which has worked out this idea.

Sture Nordh
Chairman TCO

The role of education in society

Education and research play a decisive role for the development of society. The link between work, education, and research is increasingly strong. In our global economy exposed to harsh competition, well-educated people and research, in interaction with the needs of society, are prerequisites for sustainable growth. This involves not only attaining greater productivity, but also preserving and enhancing welfare, deepening democracy, and attaining the prerequisites for a good life for individuals.

Education for competitiveness

The world and Sweden are in the midst of a significant transformation. The new and ever-changing international division of labour entails heightened competitive pressures in many industries. Demands are growing for us to reinvent ourselves and our society, and the pace of change is accelerating. Thus globalisation means that the pace of adjustments in the economy is increasing and jobs have a shorter lifetime. Thus there is a growing need for individuals and companies that can handle rapid adjustment and can absorb new information.



The new jobs will often demand a greater amount of knowledge. Thus knowledge requirements have risen sharply, and an ever-growing number of jobs are created for people with advanced educations. Thus countries that invest the most in education of individuals and their security through adjustments will cope best. This is why Sweden needs high goals throughout its educational system.

During the past few years' expansion of education, the general educational standard in Sweden has also risen considerably, not least in response to heightened needs for skills from working life. If the ambition level is lowered, Sweden's international competitive edge will be put at risk. Regions with weak scholastic traditions risk losing their energy to grow, many people will not get the same opportunities in life, and social mobility as well as labour market mobility will decline. Private enterprise and society do not profit from knowledge and education being the privilege of a few.

Through its educational system, Sweden has obtained a strong position as a society with creative, independent people capable of critical thinking. This feature of the educational system is necessary for achieving success in

global competition and therefore needs to be developed even more.

In addition to increased productivity and a smoothly functioning labour market, education is also crucial for preserving and enhancing welfare. How Sweden chooses to structure its education, research, and labour market will have a decisive impact on the development of society. It is obvious to TCO that Sweden will compete with knowledge and creativity, not with low wages and long working hours.

Education for deeper democracy

Taking part in political debate requires knowledge of complex social issues relating to everything, from the environment, the economy, and the labour market, to international and social relations. A good education improves a person's capacity to participate actively in the development of society, because education enhances the potential for understanding, analysing, and taking a position on information and changes and also enables one to express oneself better. In this way, education contributes to the creation of a living democracy, greater equality, and active citizenship.

Education for a good life

Higher education makes a vital contribution to the development of society but is also a promise for a better future for the individual. A good education is the best springboard to a better life in many ways, not least financially.

The labour market demands a continuous supply of increasingly well-educated labour. In Sweden, employment is higher among university-trained persons than among those with an upper secondary school education, and considerably higher than those who have not completed secondary school. The advantages of having a university education have not decreased during the past decade as higher education has expanded.¹ University-trained persons also have a more stable foothold in the labour market and lower unemployment than those lacking a university education.

Thus a university degree provides better preconditions for gaining employment. Lower unemployment among

university-trained persons may be attributable in part to their greater ease in moving on if their jobs disappear. This aspect of education will grow in importance as globalisation increases the pressure for transformation. Security for the employees of the future depends to a greater extent on their education.

But higher education shall not only contribute to a productive workforce. The role of education for an individual is more than that, as it grants possibilities for greater independence by enhancing one's capacity for analysis, reflection, and critical thinking.

TCO and the policy debate on higher education

TCO has always been involved in the development of the Swedish university and college sector. For us it has always been obvious that there is a close relationship between the size and organisation of higher education and working life. With good access to education, it is easier to foster dynamism and to meet changes in working life.

The principles for TCO's future work in the university and college sector are grounded in our previous involvement. At the same time, the educational landscape, the labour market, and the rest of society have changed. Thus there is a need yet again to gather ourselves around visions for higher education. The principal focus of intent should be seen as a way to strengthen our current members' and our future members' positions in the labour market.

But the perspective is broader than this. Sweden's position as an international knowledge-based nation is not self-evident. Additional allocations of funds are only part of what is needed for Sweden to retain and reinforce its

international position in higher education. Other efforts are also needed. Starting with this common programme, TCO wishes to work for an idea for higher education as a whole. We want all people to have the opportunity of a higher education of high quality at the same time as the role of higher education in society is developed.

We believe that all people can acquire knowledge and develop their capabilities. Thus higher education must not be a privilege limited to a narrow group. That some people are more suitable for manual labour and others for intellectually demanding tasks is a view we do not share. Broadening higher education could make better use of the abilities of everyone in Sweden. It would lay a solid foundation for future growth and productivity growth. Investment in education provides the prerequisites for improvement in the labour market, where a low-wage labour market need not emerge.

Sweden can afford to invest more in higher education

Well-educated people have become society's most valuable assets. To strengthen Sweden's long-term competitive strength, it is crucial that we invest more in higher education and research. Sweden does not invest enough to maintain good quality education. Calculations that take into account increased costs for undergraduate studies show that between 1994/95 and 2006 the cost of most undergraduate education increased about 20 to 30 per cent more than what the State had given the colleges in compensation.²

Education should pay

As it is desirable for more people to acquire a university education, it should be profitable for the individual to complete one. A person who has spent several years acquiring an education should receive a salary commensurate with the value of his or her knowledge and expertise.

Education has also proved itself a good investment. For example, university-trained persons have higher salaries, higher rates of employment, and lower unemployment than those who have not studied at college. This does

Sweden has very strong public finances, and in the future there will be the financial wherewithal to invest in education. Investment in education is the best investment that Sweden can make for the future. A country like Sweden must compete with knowledge. This demands high ambitions for education consisting of a greater number of places at university and to improve the quality of education by increasing the appropriation per student.

not prevent many people from having inappropriate pay, particularly in occupations dominated by women in the public sector. We also know that there is structural ethnic discrimination in working life that reduces the return on education. The skills of these groups should be assessed correctly. When the gap in salaries between groups that have and have not studied are too small, study incentives are weak, and that is not good for Sweden's competitiveness. Education must pay.

Education is a right and a duty

The general level of education in Sweden has been rising gradually. One way of illustrating Sweden's progress towards a knowledge-based nation is to consider the proportion of persons who have had the opportunity to study at upper secondary school.

In 1930, 3 per cent of men and only 0.5 per cent of women had a three-year secondary or post-secondary education. At the start of the 1950s, 8 per cent of each year's class went on to upper secondary studies. Today

almost all youth attend upper secondary school, and almost 90 per cent graduate with the qualifications to enter university.³

Another way to illustrate the trend is to consider the number of colleges. Little more than a half century ago, only the universities in Lund and Uppsala, the colleges in Stockholm and Gothenburg, and a small number of specialised trade schools offered post-secondary training. Today there are roughly 50 different institutions for post-

secondary education throughout Sweden. There is more or less at least one university or college in each county.

In Sweden, we have also seen impressive growth in the number of university-trained persons. 37 per cent of young adults (25-34 years old) have completed higher education, compared to 25 per cent of those between 55 and 64 years of age. But Sweden is not the only country that has expanded its higher education. Many other countries have also understood the value of higher education, and 12 OECD countries now train more young adults at university than Sweden does: Canada, Japan, Korea, Norway, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, the United States, Australia, and Finland.⁴

Almost 60 per cent of 15-year-olds in the OECD want to study at college, varying from more than 20 per cent in Germany to 95 per cent in Korea.⁵ In Sweden, almost 60 per cent of 15- and 18-year-olds want to study at college. The proportion is higher among women than among men.⁶ The question is whether they will be able to study at university. Youth cohorts will continue to grow fast, and the proportion of a cohort able to enter higher education is expected to decline, if no slots are added, from about 47 per cent in 2004, to about 39 per cent in 2010.⁷ Thus, people born in the 1990s will not have educational opportunities as extensive as earlier cohorts have had unless the number of slots increases when they are on their way to college.

In a society where knowledge and expertise are becoming increasingly important, a college education ought to be a possibility for everyone qualified to undertake advanced studies. The capacity of the higher education system ought to correspond more closely to the demand for that education. All the same, it is not possible for everyone to study their preferred subjects. The labour market's need for well-educated labour ought to be a key factor governing access to higher education.

But education is not only a right; it is also a duty. Each individual is responsible for his or her own development. That responsibility involves taking the opportunities offered to remain desirable in the labour market of tomorrow. The key to each individual being able to take this responsibility is that society provides the prerequisites that make it possible. Investment in the educational sector is one of these prerequisites.

Choice of education

People faced with the choices of higher education have a great need for more objective information about the situation in the labour market for various occupations and sectors. The risk that individuals choose the 'wrong' education, that is, that many people study to enter a sector with weak demand for labour, can be reduced through better information about the labour market, though an exact forecast of the future of the market is impossible.

Even more often than 'wrong education', one hears references in the debate on education policy to 'over education'. This refers to too many people having too much education. We can never have a surplus of knowledge. Thus, over education ought to be dealt with by utilising people's skills in the work place. In addition, there are no signs that the salaries of university graduates have declined because more people have completed a university education. Technological progress has meant that more education is required to perform a job now than previously, which has led to greater demand for highly educated labour. If too many people had been educated, the salaries of university graduates would have decreased. The salaries of university-trained persons have not decreased as more college slots have become available; on the contrary, salaries have increased.⁸



Lifelong learning

Working life of today and tomorrow are in constant flux. That is why people need to be able to further develop their expertise and develop new knowledge throughout their working life. We need many opportunities to learn more and learn completely new things. The option of graduating upper secondary school with both general admission

and special qualifications for college shall be a right throughout one's working life. Those already gainfully employed ought to be able to have greater access to higher education, too.

The gainfully employed must be given the economic wherewithal for lifelong learning. Thus a smoothly func-

tioning infrastructure that supports lifelong learning needs to be established. A system with some form of competence savings or competence insurance appears an ever more necessary reform, and employers ought to be given the economic incentives to invest in their employees' skills development.

If lifelong learning is to become reality for everyone, it is vital that college becomes more of an institution of continuing education for the already gainfully employed and that the range of education offered is well adapted to the needs and conditions of those already gainfully employed. It must be possible for education to be conducted flexibly and for there to be ample opportunities for

validating knowledge acquired outside the formal educational system.

This also requires that college has the resources to provide a range of continuing professional development with long as well as short courses and programmes at the basic and advanced levels. But also there ought to be incentives for colleges to educate those already gainfully employed. Thus the system for allocating resources must be constructed in a way that does not disadvantage colleges and universities that are open to the gainfully employed. The vision of open higher education shall also be the vision of higher education open to the gainfully employed.

Higher education for everyone in society

For greater awareness of knowledge, it is important that people with different backgrounds, experience, and outlooks are included in student groups. This is a prerequisite for quality. A heterogeneous composition of the group reinforces creative processes and leads to better results. A heterogeneous group of students also provides better opportunities for finding solutions to key social problems. The voicing of multiple experiences improves understanding of the subject studied and the consequences of what is being learned. But not least this is a question of fairness, that everyone shall have the same genuine opportunities for university studies. The goal is for the genders and social and ethnic backgrounds of the students to correspond to the population's in the same age group.

A society distinguished by equal opportunity for all does not evidence large differences with respect to gender or social or ethnic background. That is why it is troubling that there are large differences in Swedish society. We

know that these factors interact with one another, but it is difficult to see statistically how they interact, so they are dealt with one at a time below.

Socially uneven recruitment to higher education

In academic year 2005/06, the proportion of university entrants with a working-class background was 25 per cent. The proportion from white-collar homes was 28 per cent. If recruitment to college corresponded to the distribution in the population in age groups 19–34 years, about 33 per cent would come from working-class homes and 20 per cent from white-collar homes.⁹

With the addition of more places for higher education in the mid-1990s, socially uneven recruitment was reduced.¹⁰ From 1993/94 to 2005/06, inclusive, the proportion of university entrants coming from working-class homes increased, from 18 to 25 per cent of all entrants, at

the same time as the proportion of entrants from white-collar homes decreased, from 33 till 28 per cent. The expansion in the proportion of university entrants with a working-class background occurred primarily during the 1990s, and for the past five years this broader recruitment has stalled.¹¹

In other words, today the educational level of parents is still of major significance in the choice of an upper secondary school education and for the probability that a person will enter college. For those who begin a college education, though, the educational level in their home has little impact on their prospects of graduating. The difference in graduation frequency between different course programmes is considerably greater than the difference in graduation frequency between different groups of students in the same programme.¹²

Ethnically uneven recruitment to higher education

The number of university entrants with a foreign background (person born outside Sweden or having two parents born outside Sweden) increased 65 per cent during the period 1997/98 to 2006/07. But ethnically uneven recruitment is also still substantial. The proportion with a Swedish background (person born in Sweden with one or two parents born in Sweden) who had begun university studies at the age of 25 was considerably higher than the proportion with a foreign background. Of 25-year-olds with a Swedish background, 46 per cent had begun university studies. The corresponding number for the group with a foreign background was 35 per cent.¹³

The differences between various ethnic groups within the group of university entrants with a foreign background are quite large. Ethnically uneven recruitment correlates with socially uneven recruitment, so corrective measures

to counteract ethnically uneven recruitment are likely to coincide with the measures that ought to be taken to counteract socially uneven recruitment.

Gender-based uneven recruitment to higher education

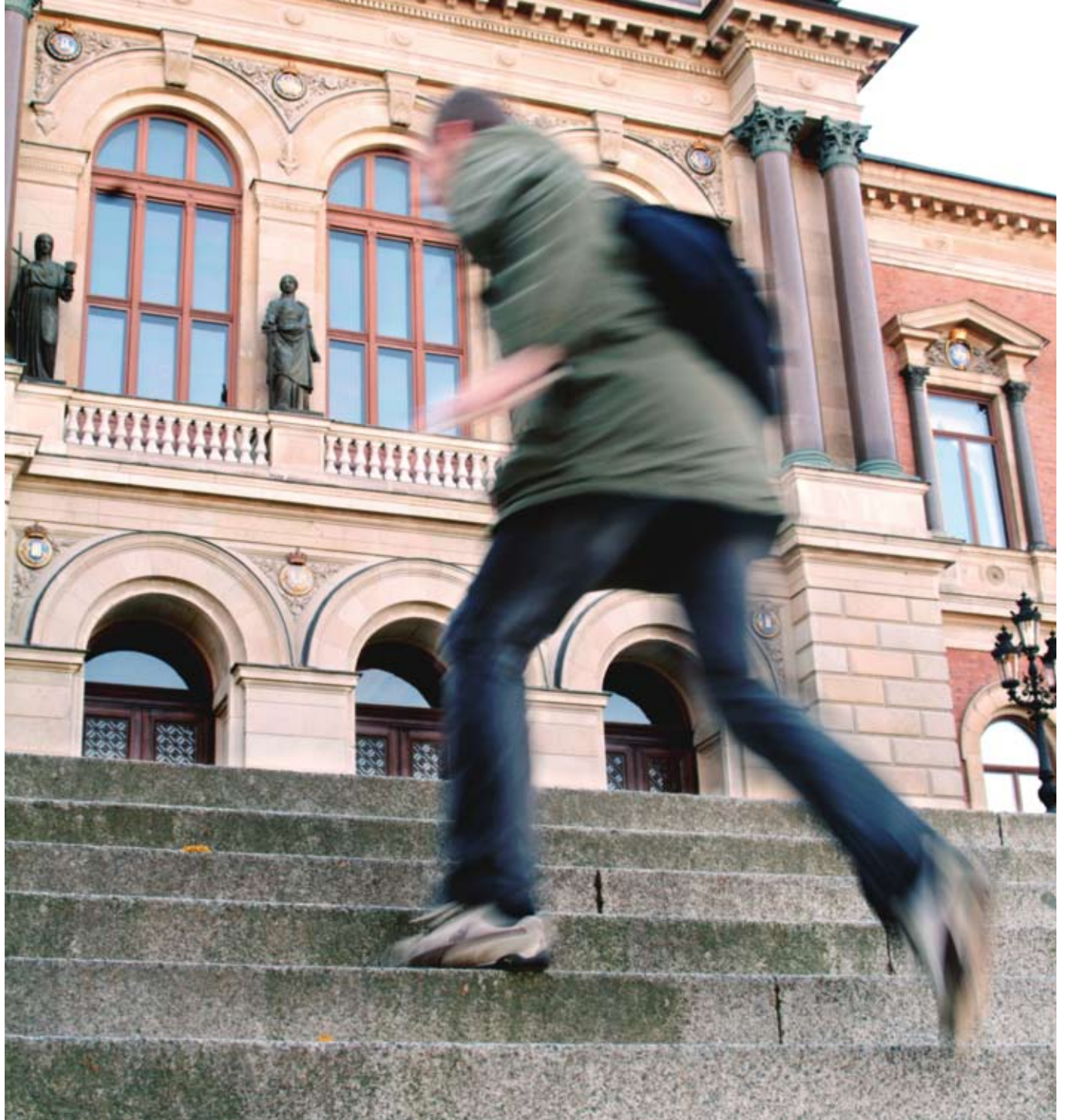
The proportion of women in college undergraduate studies has rising steadily. In the mid-1940s, the proportion was a little more than 20 per cent but by 1976 had reached 43 per cent. With the broadening of the concept of higher education in the 1977 higher education reform, the number of female students rose to 53 per cent. Since that time, the proportion of women has grown apace, reaching about 60 per cent in the past few years.¹⁴ The goal is a numerically gender-neutral group of students.

Uneven representation in higher education

Not only is there socially, ethnically, and gender-based uneven recruitment to college but also within college, not only between different programmes as well as in the steps between different levels within academe. A major challenge which must be dealt with is the gender division of programmes in higher education, which leads to many occupations also being dominated by one gender.

There is also a negative correlation between the proportion of instructors with PhDs and the proportion of students with a working-class background and a positive correlation between the proportion of instructors with PhDs and the proportion of students with parents who have a university education.¹⁵

This is related to students with a working-class background choosing more often shorter work-oriented programmes that have fewer instructors with PhDs and students with an academic background more often choosing programmes with more instructors with PhDs. To ensure



that all students regardless of social background receive high-quality education, the proportion of instructors with PhDs ought to be increased within the work-oriented programmes, too.

Initiatives to broaden recruitment

Efforts to achieve more recruitment of students from settings unaccustomed to studies must be intensified. Counteracting socially and ethnically uneven recruitment to higher education demands obvious incentives for institutes of higher education to work to broaden recruitment and make it part of their ordinary recruitment activities. Nationwide responsibility ought to be taken to improve efforts to broaden recruitment to higher education, not least to make use of international experience. A long-term nationwide strategy to broaden recruitment to higher education ought to be prepared.

The foundations for socially uneven recruitment are laid in the first years of school, and to counteract that requires an educational system that does not sort out students early but has a clear focus on helping students qualify for the next level of education. Upper secondary school shall provide all students with the qualifications to enter university. Everyone needs the knowledge that entrance qualifications entail just to handle modern working life and be able to be an active citizen in our society.

Students and their parents need to understand early on what a university education entails and how the student aid system works. Information about what the labour market looks like and what knowledge is sought after in the labour market also ought to be given to all students and parents early on in the educational system and no later than before the choice of secondary school programme and college programme. Closer ties between working life and school can awaken interest in students from settings

unaccustomed to studies to continue their schooling. Realising the vision of higher education open to everyone requires collaboration between the parties in the labour market, politicians, and the entire educational system. In these efforts, study and vocational counselling plays a key role.

The economy is a factor strictly limiting broader recruitment. People from backgrounds unaccustomed to studies are more hesitant about going into debt.¹⁶ This is one of several reasons why it is so important for higher education programmes to remain free of charge.

A working-class background is less common among younger than among older university entrants. Thus corrective measures aimed at simplifying college entrance for older and gainfully employed persons also reduce socially uneven recruitment. The 25:4 rule, which qualified for college entrance those who had turned 25 and worked for four years, ought to be reinstated. Nothing indicates that those who entered college based on this rule manage their university studies worse than others do. Validation of genuine skills, as well as acknowledgment of foreign education, is important and needs to be enhanced. If an individual with a foreign degree needs complementary training, such education should be easily available.

Use local selection criteria

The local selection criteria, which allow the institute of higher education to accept some students taking into account merits other than grades and results on the university entrance exam, ought to be used to assess more skills and to broaden recruitment to college. For example, work experience and knowledge of languages, when relevant to the programme, ought to be rewarded through local selection.

Experiences a person has gained in working life can be quite valuable for a particular education and contribute

other perspectives, which also benefits the learning of the other students. Knowledge of certain languages, especially those usually counted as immigrant languages in Sweden, regardless of whether the language was acquired in school abroad, is the mother tongue of the applicant, or has been acquired in some other way, ought to help qualify for admission to college. Language skills are important for several reasons. They enable the student to use essential scientific literature and source materials in other languages

Higher quality of education

Global competition is intensifying, and a growing number of countries are investing in education and research. For Sweden to be able to hold its own in the competition, Swedish higher education must continue to develop. This will require greater economic resources, so the allocation for each place in an educational programme must increase.

More class hours

Time is quality. But many students receive all too few class hours, many no more than five to six hours per week.¹⁷ Nothing is more significant for learning than time spent with a good pedagogue. The teacher is also the students' most important source of inspiration. Knowledge and skills develop in interaction between teacher and student and between student and student. Thus, considerably more time is needed for learning discussions between teacher and student.

Enabling more instructional time for the students requires investment in more teachers at college. Working conditions for college lecturers have deteriorated over time. The percentage increase in the number of students has been considerably higher than for teachers. The agreed time for work on instruction corresponds much too seldom to the

and from other countries. They provide access to sources that otherwise would not be available to the student or college. This broadens perspectives and improves education. In admission to educational programmes that have contact with persons receiving care and with clients, applicants who have language skills that will be useful during the sections of the programme scheduled in operations ought to be advantaged.

actual work expended. In addition, the size of groups is often quite large, which makes difficult the pedagogical task. Also, instruction does not carry enough weight in the evaluation of skills required for conditional tenure as a lecturer. Instruction must be revalued, and sufficient time must be allocated for this vital task. The teacher is the most important guarantee of quality in higher education.

More teachers with advanced degrees

A hallmark of higher education is that it is connected with research. Thus there must be a close relationship between education and research. A key prerequisite for achieving this is the availability of teachers who can mediate the link between course content and current research in the field. That is why more teachers must have completed postgraduate studies and teachers must have time to conduct their own research within the framework of their employment.

Of all teaching and research staff at universities and colleges in 2006, 62 per cent had completed some form of postgraduate studies. In other words, 38 per cent of teachers completely lacked postgraduate studies. This involves a total of almost 10,000 teachers.¹⁸ The proportion of teachers with postgraduate studies varies greatly

between institutes of higher education and subject areas, creating serious differences in quality between different programmes. Employed teachers who lack postgraduate studies ought to be offered opportunities for undertaking such studies.

Cultivate learning

Pedagogically proficient teachers are a prerequisite for fostering students' understanding and commitment. Teachers must be given the conditions for performing good work, so all teachers ought to undergo pedagogical training. Pedagogically proficient teachers ought to be appreciated and encouraged. College class instruction can be enhanced by making use of scientific research on education to a greater extent. For example, examinations ought to be designed so as to create the most learning possible in addition to checking knowledge and skills acquired.

Intensify cooperation

More intense cooperation with private enterprise, the public sector, and non-profits is necessary. An education connected to working life generates more positive effects for students. To quickly gain practical use of theoretical knowledge helps to better reinforce learning. Ongoing connections to working life can also stimulate students to learn more, because they gain better understanding of how the theoretical knowledge can be applied. An education that prepares students for working life also reduces the step from studies into working life.

Students ought to be able to meet teachers with relevant work experience. Thus college ought to encourage teachers to move between academe and the rest of working life. This would improve the connection to working life in education and cultivate cooperation between the university and college sector and the rest of the labour market.

An education connected to working life also provides the surrounding society with ongoing access to current research and insight into how education is organised. The latter is important not least for the surrounding society to be able to play a role in developing education based on the needs of the labour market.

Higher education is also part of the labour market, so all students who study programmes in preparation for post-graduate studies ought to be given knowledge about how they can begin an academic career.

Entrepreneurial know-how should be shared with more students. This is not knowledge that only students in economic and technical subjects would benefit from; a larger group of students ought to receive the tools that can help them realise their own ideas within the framework of their own enterprise.

College shall be a stimulating learning environment with strong interaction with cultural and social spheres. More than half of students declare that education has contributed to their involvement in the development of society to a very small extent or a small extent.¹⁹ Thus higher education should be cultivated to awaken more interest and create more commitment than today. One way of doing this is to more clearly associate education with working life.

Multiple perspectives and a sharper focus on critical thinking

Through its educational system, Sweden has attained a strong position as a society with creative, independent people capable of critical thinking. This feature of the educational system is necessary for achieving success in global competition and therefore needs to be developed even more.

All higher education should embody a critical attitude towards knowledge. A university education shall stimulate

independence and creativity. Today these are distinctive features of Swedish higher education but ought to be further reinforced. People who can think critically contribute to democracy in society at the same time as they possess this prerequisite for creativity and development.

The emphasis on inter- and multidisciplinary studies currently under way generates greater opportunities for collaboration between various fields of research and education. This is a positive development that gives us better preconditions for solving some of our most serious social problems.

Gender and diversity perspectives as well as sustainable development shall be integrated in instruction. But more than half of all students state that their education has contributed to a very small extent or a small extent to their understanding of people with a different ethnic or cultural background from their own.

The same is true of students' understanding of theories about the social and cultural differences between men and women.²⁰ Students ought to gain knowledge in college about how a person can contribute to sustainable development and counteract structural discrimination. Higher education must be strengthened in this task. The choice of course books is important here.

Greater internationalisation

Greater internationalisation of higher education leads to a more qualitative education, because multiple perspectives and experiences benefit teachers and students. Thus student and teacher exchanges ought to be stimulated. Students' family circumstances influence their opportunities for study abroad. For all students to have the opportunity to study abroad for shorter or longer periods, a review ought to be conducted on how opportunities for study abroad can be improved for all students.

Stricter requirements

Almost 40 per cent of students who pursue full-time studies do not think that these correspond to full-time employment, though there are major differences between various fields of education. Students who pursue full-time studies state that on average they devote between 21 and 25 hours to their studies each week. Almost half of the students think that it is easy to pass their courses, and almost one-fifth think that the requirements are too soft.²¹ Full-time studies should be full-time studies. The requirements in Swedish higher education should be tough.

Strong influence from students

A university education should encourage one to take a critical attitude. A student's influence over his or her education is essential for this, while students' independent influence is one of the most important guarantees for good quality education. Students' possibilities for influence in higher education ought to remain strong. If compulsory student union membership is abolished, the state ought to guarantee opportunities for exercising student influence by giving financial grants to the colleges to be passed on to the student unions. The grants shall be approved at a national level to guarantee the students' independence.

Resource allocation

The allocation of resources to university education shall be based on how resource-intensive forms of instruction are needed, and every student shall be assured an education with a clear foundation in research. The allocation of resources to higher education shall also reward quality in education. One criterion that ought to weigh heavily in the assessment of quality is how well the programme prepares the student for working life. The allocation of resources shall reward cooperation with the surrounding



society within the framework for the programme. The allocation of resources shall also reward the institutes of higher education that have a broad base of student recruitment.

Quality control

To promote high quality in education, resources ought to be allocated in part based on how high the quality of education is that the institutions of higher learning have succeeded in achieving in cooperation with the students. The National Agency for Higher Education's assignment to evaluate educational programmes ought to continue with a focus on the evaluators being allowed to evaluate the actual education. The role of university colleges' top administrations in quality control and further enhancement of Swedish higher education cannot be overestimated, so the administration ought to be composed based on this insight.

Better conditions for study

Our basic premise is that it is crucial to society that people become educated, so students should be offered an education free of charge and with good conditions for study. The student aid system should provide everyone with the opportunity of studying regardless of their own or their relatives' financial resources. The students' social situation for studies is important to how the students succeed with their studies.

Student aid should guarantee a reasonable living standard for the students. The total amount of student aid cannot be deemed reasonable if it is less than the norm for the size of a maintenance grant. Thus the total amount of student aid ought to be raised, especially the grant portion. The goal is for the state and the individual to share equally

Information about quality

There needs to be easily available and factual information about what the many different programmes of instruction offer. Different factors are important to different students in the choice of an education and institution of higher learning. Opportunities for contact with working life during their studies are of great interest to many. Other students feel that the specialisation of the programme, theoretical perspective, or pedagogy should determine the choice of education.

There are differences in quality between various educational programmes that need to be made visible. That is why there needs to be more information available about how those who have completed an education have progressed and if they have been employed in qualified positions.

the cost of student aid and for the grant portion and the loan portion of student aid each to account for half.

The number of weeks a person can receive student aid ought to be extended to 280, as many students are forced to complete their studies with no entitlement to student aid. This is relevant not least because more people are going to study for a longer period to obtain a master's degree. Making the wrong choice and changing direction ought to have milder consequences than it has today.

Full-time studies shall be and shall be seen as a full-time occupation that need not be combined with work to attain a tolerable standard of living. However, the earned income allowance in the student aid system ought to be generous enough so that students who have the time and

desire to work will be able to do so without forfeiting their right to student aid. On the other hand, it is important to note that one-third of the students who work feel that their work has a negative impact on their studies.²² Thus any increase in the earned income allowance should not be weighed against an increase in student aid.

The student aid system also needs to be coordinated with the social security systems so that students receive the same coverage as others in the event of illness, parenthood, or unemployment. Almost one-fifth of all students have children. Students who have not worked previously have an extremely low parents' allowance and have difficulty making ends meet. Parents who study require better financial conditions. Parents' allowance for students ought to be on a level with student aid.

Students can also fall ill, but in contrast to others they have a waiting period of 30 days. This is unreasonably long, so the waiting period ought to be shortened. Neither do students have, in contrast to others, the option of reporting sick part-time. This forces some students to call in sick full-time though they might actually be able to study part-time. This also makes it harder for students to return to their studies, as they cannot gradually increase their rate of studies. Changes must be made here.

It can take a few months to make the transition from studies to working life. It is of great concern that students who have not worked prior to their studies have no financial coverage upon unemployment after completing their studies. Nowadays, when students become unemployed they are referred to social allowance. It ought to be self-evident that students are entitled to receive unemployment allowance after completing their studies. Thus the study provision ought to be reintroduced into unemployment insurance. One of the key issues enabling students to find qualified work after their studies is for them to be able to

receive financial support while they are job seekers. Otherwise their education may never benefit themselves, an employer, or society.

Their time at university gives students significantly lower pensionable incomes compared to full-time work, which has a negative impact on their future pensions. For university studies to be more rewarding over a student's lifetime, the pensionable amount for those studies needs to be raised. It is reasonable for a student to earn as much pension as if the student had worked an equivalent time.

As concerns repayment of student loans, it is often onerous for the individual and, to a greater extent, ought to be linked to the individual's capacity to repay the loan.

To enable those already gainfully employed to develop their expertise, they need to be offered favourable social terms for their studies. Consequently, the age ladder in the student aid system ought to be abolished. Another problem that we see for the gainfully employed is that persons who have worked and fulfil the conditions for unemployment insurance suffer a shortening of the period during which they can 'put their unemployment on hold', to five years. This is unnecessarily strict, as they risk losing their right to unemployment allowance during extended study programmes. This holding period ought to be able to contain at least one ordinary extended university education, which may be considered five years in the new educational system, and allow for parental leave and illness of at least one year.

Yet another problem for students who have been gainfully employed is that those who have earned an income entitling them to sickness allowance insurance (SGI) lose this entitlement unless every week of their studies is financed by student aid. The requirement that one receive student aid in order to retain one's SGI entitlement ought to be abolished.



The future topography of higher education

The expansion of the university college system has reduced the geographic distances to higher education for many people and thus made it possible for more people to study. If more people than at present are to have the opportunity of studying at college, we must have dedicated initiatives for higher education. It is vital that we continue to have a broad assortment of programmes at universities and colleges. A reduced range of programmes would lead to fewer people being able to study what they want and thus choosing not to study at all.

The establishment of more colleges in Sweden has also been a crucial factor for growth. If universities and colleges

are to be able to conduct research relevant to their regional economies and the public sector, we must have accessibility throughout Sweden and better cooperation between institutions of higher learning and working life. A secure supply of qualified labour in local labour markets also depends on institutions of higher learning having a good geographic spread and educational programmes meeting the needs of the labour market.

A movement towards the division of institutions of higher learning into those only conducting research and those only educating students would be extremely unfortunate as it would disrupt the central interaction between

education and research. It would be particularly unfortunate for educational programmes that have existed for a short time in the university colleges as it would make more tenuous these programmes' connection to research and would contribute to lower quality, as the number of instructors with PhDs can be expected to decline.

There is a need for increased cooperation between institutions of higher learning, within Sweden and internationally, as well as with the surrounding society. Edu-

Summary

Education and research play a decisive role in the development of society. This is why Sweden needs high goals throughout its educational system, not least because globalised working life increasingly requires a university education. Knowledge requirements have risen sharply, and an ever-growing number of jobs are created for people with advanced educations.

In the global economy exposed to stiff competition, well-educated people are a prerequisite for achieving improved productivity and sustainable growth, preserving and enhancing welfare, and deepening democracy. High-quality education has become society's most valuable asset.

To strengthen Sweden's long-term competitive strength, it is crucial that we invest more in higher education and research. Sweden does not invest enough to maintain good quality education. Sweden has strong public finances, and in the future there will be the financial wherewithal to invest in education. Investment in education is the best investment that Sweden can make for the future. A country like Sweden must compete with knowledge. This demands high goals in education consisting of a greater number of places at universities and colleges and

education and research ought to be strengthened through greater cooperation with the aim of boosting quality in the operations and reducing the number of subcritical settings. Our basic premise is that the institutions of higher learning ought to be entrusted to lead these efforts for change. Decisions as to which institutions of higher learning will conduct specific kinds of education and research shall be based on scientific criteria.

improved quality of education through higher appropriations per student.

Education should pay. And education has also proved itself an excellent investment. For example, university-trained persons have higher salaries, higher rates of employment, and lower rates of unemployment than those who have not studied at college. This has not prevented many from having inappropriate pay, but their skills ought to be valued appropriately.

Almost 60 per cent of today's 15- and 18-year-olds want to study at college. In a society where knowledge and expertise are becoming increasingly important, a college education ought to be a possibility for everyone qualified to undertake advanced studies. The capacity of the higher education system ought to correspond more closely to the demand for that education. Education is a right. All the same, it is not possible for everyone to study their preferred subjects. The labour market's need for well-educated labour ought to be a key factor governing access to higher education.

It will be necessary to be able to alternate work with study throughout one's working life to command the

knowledge and expertise required in a changeable working life. We need many opportunities to learn, to learn more, and to learn completely new things. Thus a smoothly functioning infrastructure that supports lifelong learning needs to be established.

Diversity within a student group and diverse experiences and perspectives are prerequisites for quality. The voicing of multiple experiences improves understanding of the subject studied and the consequences of what is being learned. The goal is for the genders and social and ethnic backgrounds of the students to correspond to the population's in the same age group.

Efforts to recruit more students from settings unaccustomed to studies must be intensified. A long-term nationwide strategy to broaden recruitment to higher education ought to be prepared.

Initiatives ought to be taken to improve the quality of education, with several factors of particular interest:

- Students ought to have more teacher-supervised class hours and an education more closely connected to working life.
- The proportion of teachers with postgraduate studies ought to be increased, and all teachers should have completed pedagogical training.
- More students ought to gain international experience and be given ample opportunity to study abroad.
- It is important for all higher education to embody gender and diversity perspectives and sustainable development. Full-time studies should be full-time studies. The requirements in Swedish higher education should be tough.
- The students' independent influence is one of the most important guarantees for good quality edu-

cation. The students' influence shall be guaranteed to be independent from the institutes of higher education.

- The allocation of resources to university education shall be based on what resource-intensive forms of instruction are needed and shall reward quality, cooperation, and broader recruitment.
- There needs to be easily available and factual information about what the many different educational programmes offer.

It is crucial to society that people educate themselves, so students shall be offered an education free of charge with good conditions for study. Thus the grant portion of student aid ought to be increased. Social security systems are poorly adapted for students. Students must be able to feel secure during short or long illnesses, in parenthood, and if unemployed after their studies. We need to make changes here.

The expansion of the university college system has reduced the geographic distances to higher education for many people and thus made it possible for more to study. If more people than at present are to have the opportunity of studying at college, we must have dedicated initiatives for higher education. It is vital that we maintain a broad assortment of programmes at universities and colleges.

The establishment of more colleges in Sweden has also been a crucial factor for growth. If universities and colleges are to be able to conduct research relevant to their regional economies and public sector, we must have accessibility throughout Sweden and better cooperation between institutions of higher learning and working life.

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