

Finding the Way: A Discussion of the Swedish Migrant Integration System



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International Migration Division

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Introduction

Sweden's foreign-born population has been growing for many decades. In 2013 close to 16% of the Swedish population were born abroad, putting Sweden among the OECD countries with the largest foreign-born population, and a further 5% of native-born Swedes had two foreign-born parents. Integration of immigrants and their children is therefore of key importance for the Swedish economy and society as a whole.

At the same time, labour market outcomes of immigrants and their children often lag behind those of other Swedes. These outcomes have to be seen against the backdrop of a large proportion of migrants who have arrived for humanitarian reasons. Between 2003 and 2012, nearly 20% of permanent migrant inflows into Sweden were made up of humanitarian migrants – the largest share of all OECD countries. Such migrants have more difficulties to integrate in all OECD countries.

A first OECD review of the Swedish system for labour market integration of migrants, conducted in 2004, found their outcomes to be unfavourable in an international context and recommended measures such as enhancing language and vocational training and giving a clearer labour market focus to integration policy (OECD, 2007). Since then, much thought has gone into policy design in Sweden. In December 2010, a new law was introduced to increase the labour market focus of introduction activities for certain newly arrived migrants and, to this end, responsibility for the new programme was placed under the aegis of the public employment service (see Annex B for details). This change, alongside other labour-market oriented initiatives, has insured that Sweden is well advanced relative to other OECD countries with respect to policy governing the integration of new arrivals. In spite of this, however, there remains room for improvement in integration outcomes and recent refugee cohorts still have low employment rates.

What is lost in the translation from policy reform to improved migrant outcomes? The answer to this question is complicated by events – both political and economic – that have influenced the composition of the migrant inflow as well as the labour market conditions they face upon arrival in Sweden.

In order to tackle this complex question, the OECD co-organised, together with the Swedish Ministries for Employment and Finance, a workshop that brought together practitioners – drawn from across government ministries and agencies, social partners, regional actors and private sector employers – to discuss the Swedish integration system in a holistic manner. The design of the workshop built upon information gathered during a fact-finding mission involving close to 100 individuals, including politicians, social partners, as well as personnel working operationally with integration such as municipal administrators, employment officers and teachers.

Building on the in-depth knowledge and expertise of each participant, the workshop – held on 28th April in Stockholm – first worked to identify the bottlenecks and shortcomings in the design and implementation of integration policy in Sweden. Supported by expert peer reviewers from other OECD countries, participants then began to develop concrete ideas of how to tackle these challenges.

The workshop focused on seven themes identified by the OECD and the Swedish authorities as critical issues facing migrants in their integration into the Swedish labour market.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| I. Basic skills and Swedish language for adults | V. Networks and job search |
| II. Validation and recognition | VI. School-to-work transitions |
| III. Employer demand | VII. Co-ordination among actors |
| IV. Discrimination | |

Each of these seven thematic areas was discussed in small sub-groups. The findings in these areas form the basis of this synthesis note and will be discussed in turn, following a brief presentation of the Swedish situation as highlighted at the beginning of the workshop.

The views expressed in this note, however, do not necessarily reflect the views of all participants in the workshop.

A shared understanding of integration in Sweden

In most countries in the OECD, migrants face more difficulties finding employment compared with their native-born peers – and Sweden is no exception in this regard and indeed, the gaps are larger than elsewhere. Indeed, across the educational distribution the large disparities in employment levels between immigrants and the native-born put Sweden among the worst performers in the OECD.

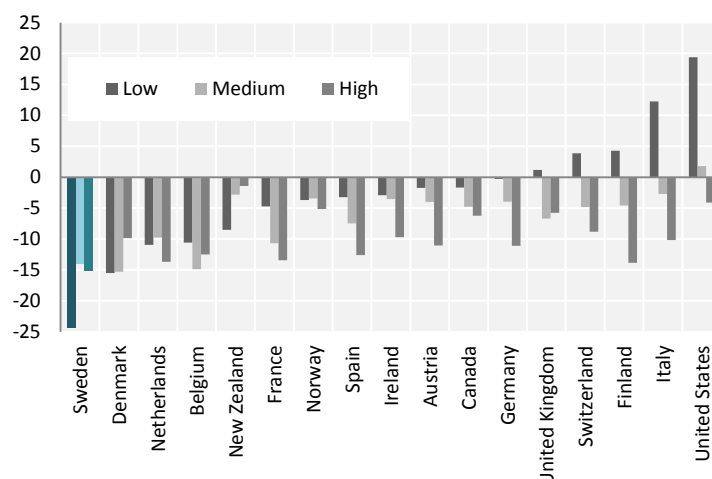
Where Sweden clearly stands out, however, is with respect to the large disparity in the employment levels of low-qualified migrants and their native-born counterparts. Employment rates among the low-educated lag nearly 25 percentage points behind the native-born (Figure 1) and among those who are in employment, many are in jobs requiring less than their formal education level (see Challenge II). These outcomes are certainly dependent, to some extent, on the composition of the migrant population: many refugees come from countries with failing education systems and lack even basic qualifications and skills (see Challenge I below); others with tertiary qualifications often acquired these in a very different context, raising issues about the transferability of their credentials (see Challenge II below).

Alongside this, the discrepancy between employment levels among immigrants and native-born women is also particularly pronounced in Sweden. Again, this should be viewed in the context of the labour market participation of Swedish-born women which is high compared with that in other OECD countries, and even more so compared with those countries from which many of Sweden's immigrants originate. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement.

That many of Sweden's immigrants came for humanitarian reasons, from origin countries where the education systems and labour markets are quite different from those prevalent in Sweden, can only partially explain the disparities in labour market outcomes between immigrants and the native-born. Additional hurdles include: language barriers (see Challenge I), discrimination (see Challenge IV), and the importance of networks in finding employment (see Challenge V). Indeed, many of Sweden's largest immigrant groups appear to have had more ease entering employment elsewhere in the OECD (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 1. Employment by educational attainment

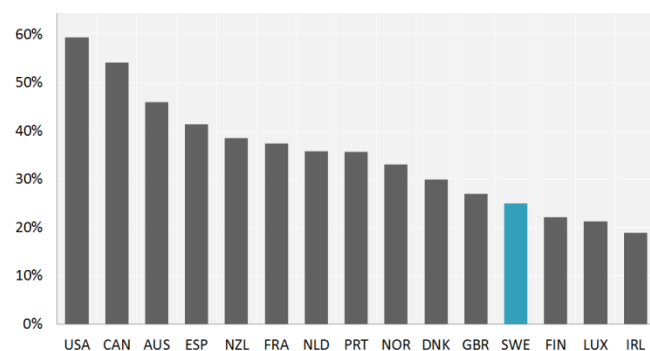
Percentage point differences in the employment/population ratios between native- and foreign-born, 15-64 years old, 2012



Low/Medium/High education refers to ISCED levels 0-2/3-4/5+.

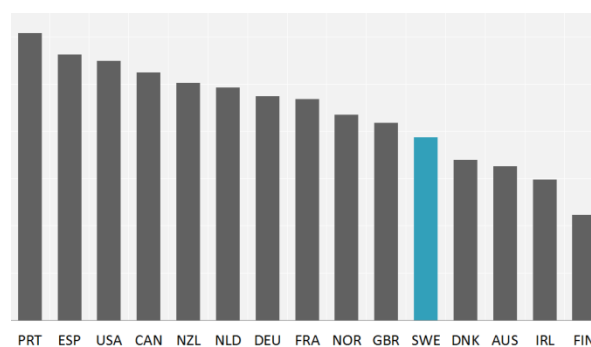
Source: European Labour Force Survey 2008, ad-hoc module; Australian Survey of Education and Training 2009; Canadian 2006 census; United States Current Population Survey 2008.

Figure 2. Employment rate among Somali migrants, 25-64, 2010



Source: Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries 2010/2011 (forthcoming).

Figure 3. Employment rate among Iraqi migrants, 25-64, 2010



Disparities exist also among youth who should still be developing their skills. NEET rates in Sweden are higher among foreign-born youth; they have also been increasing faster since the onset of the crisis than among native-born youth. Even those born in Sweden to immigrant parents have, on average, lower educational attainment than those whose parents were also born in Sweden, although the differences are not larger than elsewhere in the OECD (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Proportion of immigrant and native-born youth who have a low level of education

Persons aged 25 to 34, by place of birth and parents' place of birth, around 2008. Includes those in education

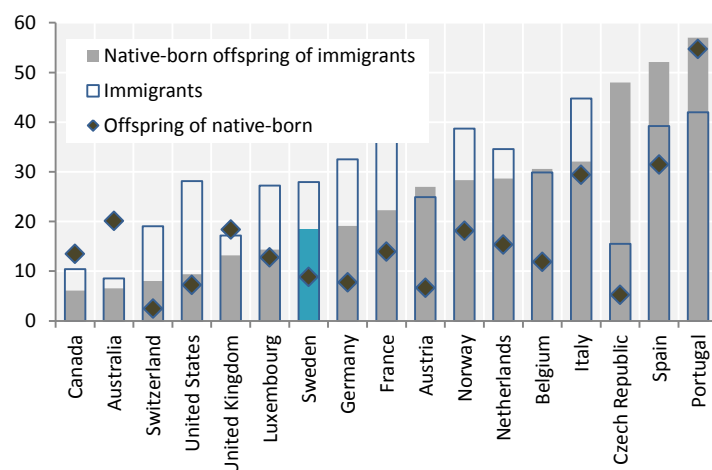
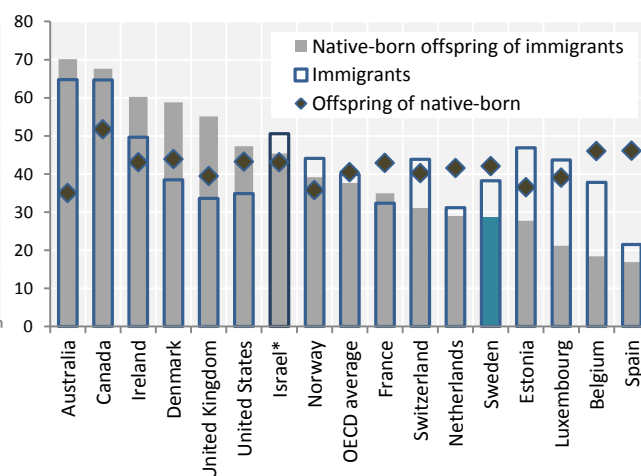


Figure 5. Proportion of immigrant and native-born youth who have a high level of education

Persons aged 25 to 34, by place of birth and parents' place of birth, around 2008. Includes those in education



* Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: European Union Labour Force Survey 2008, ad-hoc module; Australian Survey of Education and Training 2009; Canadian 2006 census; United States Current Population Survey 2008.

Given the large and growing share of immigrants and the challenges associated with population ageing, Sweden cannot afford to waste the valuable skills embodied in immigrants and their children. If they are effectively integrated, migrants can represent an important resource to support economic growth. For example, close to 24% of doctors practicing in Sweden were trained abroad – an increase of 10 percentage points in the last ten years. These health workers, as well as some of those qualified in other priority sectors, have benefitted from support in getting their qualifications recognised and upgraded through bridging courses. Yet, those whose skills do not pertain to priority sectors also have the potential to boost the productivity of the Swedish economy. Indeed, the proportion of migrants who have attained a tertiary education is higher than native Swedes. Yet, over 30% are working in jobs for which they are over-qualified (Challenge II).

Against the backdrop of this shared understanding of the Swedish context, seven key challenges and the policy directions to address them - as identified in the workshop - are discussed in turn below.

Challenge I. Basic skills and Swedish language for adults

Basic skills

The poor employment outcomes among Sweden's low-educated immigrants can, to some extent, be explained by the composition of Sweden's immigrant population alongside the declining number of low-skilled jobs in the Swedish economy. The proportion of the foreign-born population whose highest education is primary or pre-primary is nearly 10 percentage points higher than among the native-born population (see Figure 6).

A similar picture emerges from recently released data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills which suggests that the literacy levels of the foreign-born with a low level of education lag 60 points behind their native counterparts; equivalent to approximately 8 years of schooling. It should, however, be remembered that language also plays a role in tests of functional literacy.

Language

Knowledge of the host-country language is a key factor in determining the speed and success of integration – both economic and social. Language skills are an essential prerequisite in the ability of the foreign-born to form networks with the native-born population and search for a job. And, since both networks and employment are important routes through which to build further language skills, poor knowledge of the host country language can prompt a vicious cycle. In terms of the use of migrant skills, language abilities have not only a substantial impact on the transferability of skills, but are also a key component of further skill acquisition.

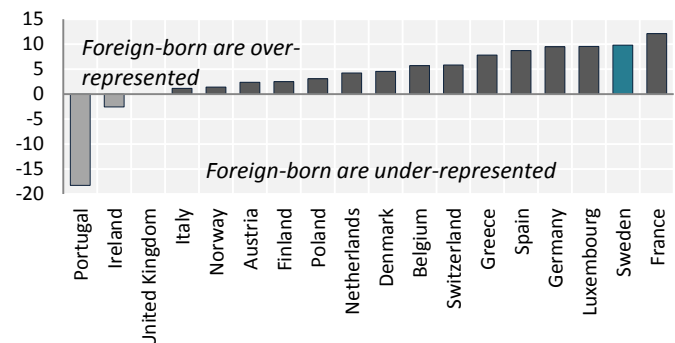
In 2010, only 13% of migrants to Sweden came from a country in which one of the main official languages was Swedish. This compares with over 45% of immigrants to Canada, France and the United Kingdom, and up to 76% of immigrants to New Zealand.

Policy governing basic skills and language in Sweden

- Language training in Sweden is a mandatory component of the introduction plan, co-ordinated by the public employment service. The provision of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), however, is the responsibility of the municipality and as such can vary from one municipality to the next. Municipalities are obliged to offer SFI for municipal residents who lack basic knowledge of Swedish the quality, however, is variable, and while in some municipalities the offer is highly developed – even including language training tailored to particular professions – elsewhere the offer is more limited.
- In addition to providing adult immigrants with a basic knowledge of the Swedish language, SFI aims to give illiterate immigrants the opportunity to learn to read and write, developing their ability to communicate in Swedish, both orally and in writing. SFI is also intended as preparation for further study.
- Depending on their educational background and prior knowledge, students are placed within one of three programmes with varying degrees of intensity and ambition. SFI courses can be based within municipality-run schools or can be contracted out to external providers. In 2010, about 35% of the students were enrolled in courses offered by private institutions, adult educational associations (*Studieförbund*) and folk high schools (*Folkhögskolor*).
- Beyond SFI, municipal adult education at basic level (*Komvux*) and for those with learning disabilities (*Särvux*) aims to give adults the knowledge they need to take part in society and the labour market as well as to prepare them for further study. Municipal adult education at upper-secondary level corresponds to the levels set for pupils at upper-secondary school.

Figure 6. Proportion of those with very low education levels

Percentage point differences in the proportion of those with very low education levels (ISCED 0/1) between immigrants and native-born populations, aged 25-54, 2012



Source: European Labour Force Survey.

Key challenges

- The quality of SFI provision seems to vary substantially across the country.
- Swedish for Immigrants may not always be sufficient to enable very low-skilled migrants to learn to read and write.
- Adult education is inappropriately tailored to the needs of migrants lacking basic literacy skills and must currently be financed by the migrants themselves.
- Project-based programmes targeted at basic skills limit stability and long-term budgeting.
- Segregation in schools and housing limits interactions with native Swedes and hence language development.

Possible directions for future policy development

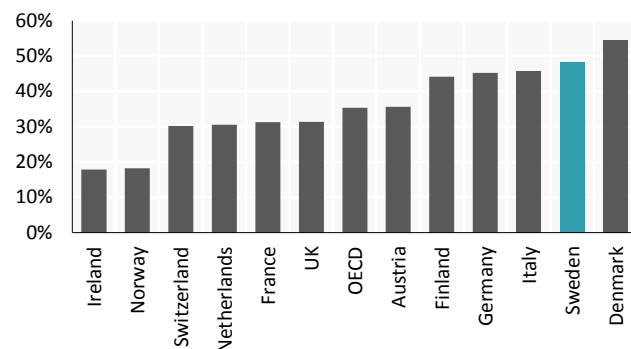
- 1. Quality of SFI provision.** The number of new arrivals participating in language tuition (SFI) has increased sharply in recent years, and between 2005 and 2011, the number more than doubled. However, of those who participated, 23% dropped out and a further 38% achieved only the lowest passing grade. In an attempt to address the shortcomings in SFI attainment, in 2009 the government introduced a performance-based bonus to motivate migrants, payable to newly-arrived migrants achieving a passing grade within a specified time period. Following an evaluation that identified significant effects only in Stockholm and other major urban agglomerations, this pilot is to be discontinued from August 2014. A potential explanation for this limited impact outside the major cities is that it is the quality of SFI provision – particularly outside urban areas – that is the constraint on attainment rather than the motivation of the migrants. The qualifications required to teach SFI are currently less stringent than the requirements facing other teachers in the education system, and the government is investing to upgrade the competences of language teachers.
- 2. Flexibility of SFI.** Language training is more often *effective* when combined with vocational training or work. For many parents, language training is only *possible* when combined with childcare.
- 3. Labour market focus.** The labour market reforms of 2010 that placed introduction of new arrivals under the aegis of the PES did a great deal to shift the emphasis of policy to labour market integration. SFI, however, which represents the bulk of funding for the introduction of new arrivals, remains in the hands of municipalities. As such, in some cases, the emphasis of language provision may be insufficiently focused on the goal of labour market entry.
- 4. Support for those lacking basic skills.** The objective of SFI, in addition to providing immigrants with a basic knowledge of the Swedish language, is to equip those adults who cannot read and write with these fundamental skills. However, migrants lacking these very basic skills may be unable to obtain them within the introduction period and may end up parked on SFI courses.
- 5. Education and training pathways for adult migrants.** Adult learning is currently confined to either short PES-administered courses or long-term adult education. Flexible training pathways, including on the job training, could be developed offering migrants the chance to pursue, alongside work, their longer-term aspirations and gain skills relevant to the Swedish labour market. There is currently no funding beyond the introduction benefit for formal adult education. Undertaking such education thus often requires that the participant takes out a loan from the CSN (*Centrala Studiestödsnämnden*) to top-up the grant that they provide.

Challenge II. Validation and recognition

Across the OECD, education acquired outside the OECD is strongly discounted in the host-country labour market. Indeed, analysis of wages and of the probability of over-qualification suggests that, in most countries, the country in which the highest qualification was obtained matters more than the country of birth.

Given large number of Swedish immigrants who obtained their education and work experience abroad (Figure 7), there is a strong need for efficient and credible recognition of their qualifications and validation of informal competences.

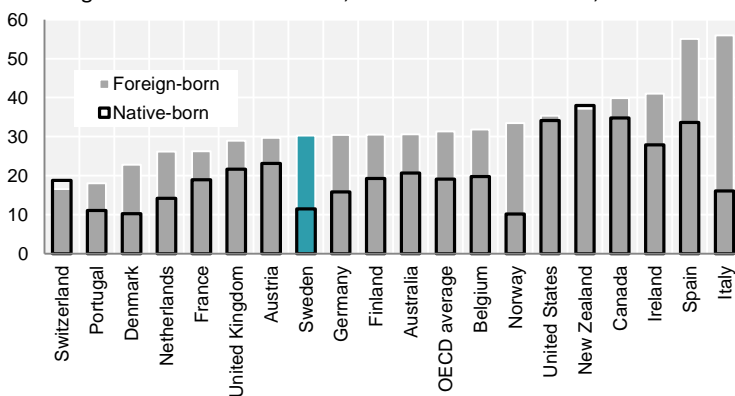
Figure 7. Share of highly qualified individuals born in non-OECD countries
Persons aged 25-64 who obtained their education outside the host country, selected OECD countries, 2011-12



Source: Labour Force Surveys (Eurostat) 2011-12.

Figure 8. Overqualification rates of the highly-educated employed individuals

Persons aged 15-64 not in education, selected OECD countries, around 2012



Source: Australia, Canada: Labour Force Surveys 2009-10; European countries: Labour Force Surveys 2012; New Zealand: Labour Force Survey 2009-10; United States: Current Population Survey 2008.

Over-qualification

A large proportion of the highly-educated foreign-born in Sweden – over 30% – are over-qualified for their jobs, compared with just over 10% of the native-born population (Figure 8).

If a migrant is employed in a job for which he/she is over-qualified, there is no public support available for training/education with the aim of finding a job appropriate to their formal education level. Indeed, recent research in Sweden has found that few of those who are in jobs for which they are over-qualified are able to move into more appropriate jobs – this is particularly the case among migrants (Andersson et al., 2012).¹

Policy governing recognition and validation in Sweden

- Complementary education is currently available in Sweden for certain occupational categories, including teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and dentists.
- Since 2013, all assessment of foreign education is undertaken under the aegis of a new agency, the University and Higher Education Council (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*). In 2013, the agency received close to 14 000 applications, of which close to 10 000 were resolved. Applications for recognition in regulated professions are sent to other competent bodies, such as the National Board of Health and Welfare. Additional resources have been allocated to shorten processing times and meet increased inflows of individuals with a foreign education.
- The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is responsible for co-ordinating the validation of foreign professional qualifications as well as providing certificates and synchronising joint efforts with relevant stakeholders in the field.
- Efforts are currently underway to increase the number of validations of competences – acquired in both formal and informal settings – undertaken by employers in the workplace.

1. Andersson, P., N. Datta Gupta and E. Wadensjö (2012), "Overeducation Among Immigrants in Sweden. Incidence, Wage Effects and State Dependence", *IZA Discussion Papers*, No. 6695, Bonn.

Key challenges

- **Validation** of formal and informal competences is rare and only gradually developing.
- **Recognition** is difficult for those who have not finished or who have no proof of their degrees.
- **Bridging courses** (complementary education) are undeveloped and, where they exist, they can require a very large time investment.

Possible directions for future policy development

- 1. Co-ordination between validation and the PES.** The introduction programme for certain newly arrived immigrants, introduced in 2010 (see Annex B), is based around a tailored plan that aims to individualise the integration process on the basis of the immigrants' background. However, the referral of new arrivals to the University and Higher Education Council is currently at the discretion of the PES caseworker working with the migrant to design the introduction plan. The qualification an immigrant holds is perhaps the most critical component in determining their integration path and the necessary skill upgrading that they require. Validation that is undertaken early is therefore fundamental to build an appropriate introduction plan and find an appropriate job.
- 2. Support for those highly qualified migrants who accept a low-skilled job.** Highly qualified immigrants who enter employment that does not utilise their qualifications are no longer among the unemployed. As such, they are ineligible for continued PES support. Without support, immigrants may struggle to identify appropriate bridging courses and, subsequently, to find employment in the field in which they are qualified.
- 3. Co-operation with employers.** Employer uncertainty about the real value of the qualifications and experience immigrants hold presents a significant hurdle impeding the labour market entry immigrants without experience in Sweden. Credible and harmonised validation of competences will help those entering the labour market to overcome this uncertainty. In order to be accepted, validation must involve employers in order to build trust, target skills shortages, create a harmonised system, and ensure the resultant assessments are accepted and utilised. While efforts are currently underway to enhance employer involvement, it is important to make sure that they are an integral part of the certification procedure.
- 4. Bridging courses (complementary education).** The government has allocated additional resources to maintain the number of places on bridging courses for a selected number of regulated professions such as teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and dentists. This offer could be expanded beyond these regulated professions.

Challenge III. Employer demand

Employers may not always consider employing immigrants for a number of reasons:

- **Skills mismatch.** It may simply be that the skills of immigrants are not those that are demanded in the local labour force. Indeed, given high number of immigrants in Sweden with a limited educational background, there may be an element of such a mismatch.
- **Risk aversion and uncertainty.** Relatively strict employment protection legislation in Sweden for permanent employment means that the risks of hiring migrants, whose skills and qualifications are subject to greater uncertainty than their native-born counterparts, may discourage employers from hiring foreign-born workers on permanent contracts. As a result, migrants, are often hired on temporary contracts where, in addition to earning less, they are in less stable employment and are less likely to benefit from training.
- **Poor matching mechanisms.** The reliance of the Swedish labour market on networks and informal contacts limits the ability of immigrants to gain access to all job offers in the market (see Challenge V).

It is not just among private sector employers that demand for migrant labour has been low in the past and this limited demand does not only concern those persons who themselves immigrated. Indeed, both the foreign-born and the native-born children of immigrants are under-represented in the public sector in most OECD countries – Sweden included. However, the Swedish public sector has made steady progress towards increasing the diversity of its employees in the past ten years and the proportion of new hires from the foreign-born population exceeded the proportion in the Swedish population for the first time in 2012 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Evolution of the share of state employees with a foreign background, 2003-2012

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
State employees ¹	10.3	10.4	10.6	11.1	11.4	12.0	12.5	13.3	14.1	15.2
New state employees ²	14.5	15.2	15.3	16.6	17.2	18.4	19.0	20.4	21.4	23.9
Employment (20-64)	13.4	13.6	13.9	14.4	15.1	15.6	15.8	16.5	17.2	n.a.
Population (20-64)	17.4	17.8	18.2	18.8	19.6	20.3	21.1	21.8	22.4	23.0

1. People with monthly paid employment of mandatory and voluntary members of Swedish Agency for Government Employers.

2. Persons who were not employees of the state last year and people who have changed employing agency since last year.

Source: Swedish Agency for Government Employers.

Policy supporting employer demand in Sweden

- There exist several programmes to encourage employers to hire migrants.

These include:

- “Step-in-jobs” provides a subsidy of 80% of wage costs of new arrivals for up to 24 months
- “New Start Jobs” provides a tax relief equivalent to double the employers’ social security contribution
- “Apprenticeships for new arrivals” compensates employers for on-the-job coaching costs
- “Applied basic year” funds low educated new arrivals with training on the job

Key challenges

- **Relatively low take-up** of initiatives targeted at increasing employer demand for migrant skills.
- **Employment protection legislation** for permanent jobs combined with risk aversion among employers limits the ability of migrant workers to obtain this type of contract.
- **Vacancies registered with the PES** receive many applications from who apply to fulfill job search criteria, irrespective of whether they are always appropriately qualified for the position.
- **Poor information** limits employers' understanding of migrant skills and qualifications.

Possible directions for future policy development

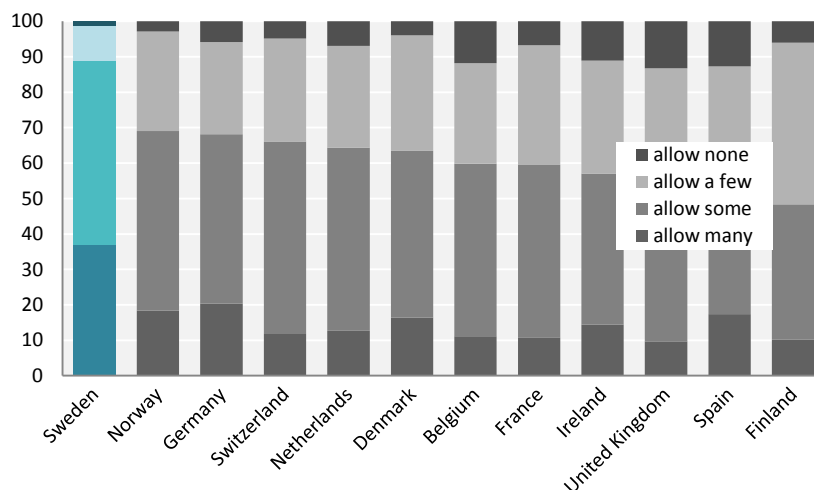
- 1. Awareness of existing initiatives.** The initiatives outlined above, introduced in order to enhance employer demand, will only be effective if employers are aware of them. More could be done to support employers in identifying in which ways, and to what extent, they can benefit from targeted programmes.
- 2. Co-operation with employers.** The government's aim of providing 4 000 positions per month under the "Step-in Jobs" initiative has not been realised, there are currently approximately 2 500 positions per month. Consultation with employers should inform refinements of such initiatives, to ensure that they are adequately attractive. For example, "Step-in Jobs", which in spite of covering 80% of wage costs, is said to be unattractive to employers, in the first place because of the short duration of the subsidy and in the second place because of the obligations it imposes on employers. These obligations involve enabling employees to participate in SFI alongside their work (such that they can overcome the language barriers that may reduce their productivity in the short term) and insurance obligations equivalent to those of contracts signed under collective agreements (which can reach approximately 5% of pre-tax wages). Furthermore, the subsidy is capped such that it covers mainly jobs in the bottom decile of the wage distribution, and the effective subsidy is not significantly larger than that provided under "New Start Jobs", which places fewer requirements on employers.
- 3. Efficiency of wage subsidy administration.** Limited take-up of some initiatives can also result from the administrative burden they imply for the PES – which may limit the number of referrals they make. At the same time, while the PES is heavily involved in organising the placement, it has little power to ensure compliance.
- 4. Support to employers' recruitment.** Employer demand for migrant skills is, in large part, limited by a lack of information about the skills of migrants. Better identification and selection of suitable migrant candidates may help overcome this.
- 5. Employment of migrants in the public sector.** The employment of migrants in the public sector increases the day-to-day contact between migrants and the native-born. As such, it is an important tool to ensure that misconceptions and information deficiencies do not perpetuate. Public sector employment of those with a foreign background also increases the visibility of migrants in public life, provides role models for youth with a foreign background, and ensures that migrants are given the opportunity to integrate and develop their skills. Employment of the foreign-born in the Swedish public sector has been increasing in recent years (see Table 1) but continues to lag behind private sector employment of the foreign born.

Challenge IV. Discrimination

Discrimination generally takes one of two forms. The first, known as “statistical discrimination”, occurs when lack of information about a candidate’s experience or qualifications causes risk-averse employers to avoid hiring him/her. Recent analysis of the OECD Survey of Adult Skills suggests that the literacy proficiency within educational categories is on average lower among immigrants than among the native-born and there is wide variation within the immigrant population. The second, “taste-based” discrimination, occurs when employers simply prefer to hire candidates with a particular origin.

Figure 9. Attitudes towards welcoming immigrants

Views of the population regarding the number of migrants of a different race or ethnic group who should be allowed to come and live in the country, 2008-2012



In practice, it is often difficult to distinguish between these two types of discrimination, as statistical discrimination tends to be based upon prejudices rather than accurate perceptions about immigrants and indeed, the effects on the individual immigrant tend to be the same. Situation testing using fictitious job applications with immigrant-sounding names and otherwise equivalent CVs revealed a high incidence of discrimination in Sweden, in spite of a strong anti-discrimination framework and a generally welcoming attitude (see Figure 9).

Source : European Social Survey.

Discrimination Policy in Sweden

- Since 2009, the Swedish Anti-Discrimination Act consolidated anti-discrimination policy under the aegis of the Equality Ombudsman (DO). The DO is a government agency that seeks to combat discrimination (on grounds of sex, transgender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age) and promote equal rights and opportunities for everyone.
- The 2009 act introduced a new penalty for discrimination – both to deter discrimination and to compensate for its effects. The DO registers and investigates complaints based on the law’s prohibition of discrimination and harassment, and can represent victims in court free of charge. In 2012, 1 559 complaints were received by the DO, representing a reduction of 20% compared with 2011 and of 40% compared with 2010.
- In addition, the DO monitors how employers, higher education institutions and schools live up to the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act and promotes active measures against discrimination.
- Finally, the Ombudsman is tasked with raising awareness and disseminating knowledge and information about discrimination and about the prohibitions against discrimination, both among those who risk discriminating against others and those who risk being subjected to discrimination.
- Local anti-discrimination agencies (which are independent voluntary organisations) provide advice and support at local level regarding anti-discrimination laws.

Tackling discrimination

Key challenges

- **Anti-discrimination laws** are difficult to implement because discrimination is difficult to prove.
- **Implicit discrimination** can take many different forms and is difficult to identify. Unnecessarily high language requirements often result in effective discrimination.
- **Some recruitment practices**, for example by hiring only via specific channels uncommon to immigrants, may also enable discrimination.
- **Stereotypes**, which are at the root of discrimination, are difficult to tackle.

Possible directions for future policy development

1. **Enhancing the benefit to employers of non-discrimination.** Tools employed in other countries involve policy instruments such as diversity charters and diversity labels. Diversity charters are voluntary commitments in which private companies pledge to promote diversity and equal opportunities at the workplace. Diversity labels go a step further, delivering a certification based on an assessment of implementation of diversity measures.
2. **Raise awareness of discrimination.** Anti-discrimination laws are often difficult to enforce. In many cases, discrimination is not overt, and in some cases the party that discriminates might be unaware that its behaviour is discriminatory. Raising awareness about the issue, and about implicit practices, is an important first step.
3. **Signaling.** Statistical discrimination is based upon inadequate knowledge about a candidate's motivation and abilities. By providing tools which allow migrants to signal their quality (for example through enrollment in prestigious and selective programmes), policy can help to overcome the discrimination that results from such information asymmetries.
4. **Tackling stereotypes.** Broader integration measures that bring immigrants into contact with employers – such as mentoring and traineeships – will help to overcome the information deficit that often underpins discrimination.
5. **Overcoming uncertainty among employers.** Wage subsidies and employer tax relief targeted to new jobs for immigrants – such as those provided under “Step-in-Jobs” and “New Start Jobs” – play the dual role of i) compensating for the limited productivity of immigrants during their first work experience in Sweden (for example due to limited language abilities) and ii) allowing employers to overcome imperfect knowledge of the skills of the immigrant by hiring them initially on a trial basis. Genuine experience of working with immigrants is often far more effective in combating discrimination than anti-discrimination law itself. Other tools which give employers the ability to observe the skills of immigrant workers at a limited risk could be considered.
6. **Programme evaluation.** It is important that in-depth evaluations of all programmes are conducted and results are reflected in policy design. Although Sweden makes more use of such evaluations than many other OECD countries, it remains a priority.

Challenge V. Networks and job search

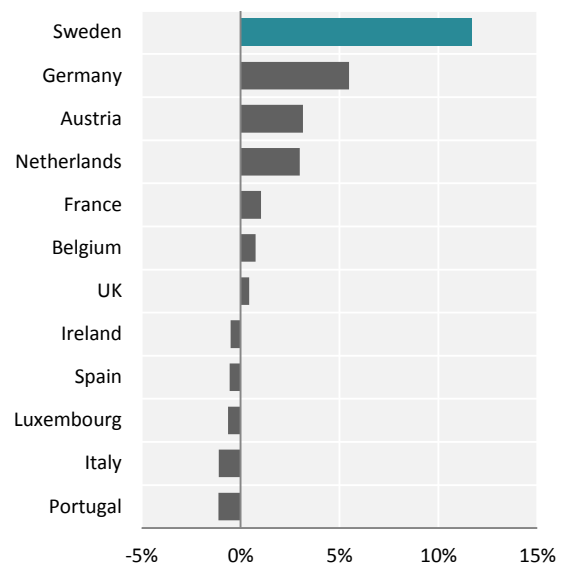
Effective use of migrant skills requires that supply and demand meet – i.e. that migrant job seekers are able to find and apply for job vacancies appropriate to their skills.

The first port of call – both for newly-arrived migrants and the unemployed – is often the public employment service (PES). However, in Sweden, relatively few employers post their vacancies with the PES and, those who do so, frequently report being overwhelmed by the number of applications from individuals receiving benefits, who apply to comply with job-search requirements. Many vacancies are instead filled through informal networks, including contacts via friends, relatives and existing employees.

Newly arrived immigrants tend to have fewer networks that are relevant to the labour market than do native-born Swedes. The contacts of migrants with longer Swedish residency will often themselves be more distant from the labour market or concentrated in lower-skilled jobs. Thus, the heavy reliance of the job-matching process on informal networks in Sweden can limit access to jobs by migrants and put them at a significant disadvantage in the labour market. As a result, despite the relatively limited access to job vacancy information of the Swedish PES, when compared to native-born Swedes, many migrants rely the public employment service as their primary source of job search support (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percentage point difference in reliance on PES in job search

Foreign-born minus native-born, 2008



Note: Respondents could also respond “migrant or ethnic organisation” or “other”. Most (75%) Swedish native-born have the code “no answer”.

Source: Labour Force Survey (Eurostat) 2008.

Networks and job search in Sweden

- Since the 2010 reform, each participant of the introduction programme has the right to an “introduction guide”. This introduction guide is an individual contracted to guide newly arrived immigrants during their first years in Sweden.
- The roles of the guide include: the provision of support in looking for work and career guidance; advice on social matters; and the provision of access to networks.
- Introduction guide services are contracted out to private organisations or companies to whom the PES pays a monthly fee, which is supplemented on the basis of the employment results of the programme participant.
- The PES provides information on the guides from which participants can choose. The PES does not, however, make recommendations regarding the choice of guides. If the participant does not choose a guide, one is assigned on the basis of residential proximity.
- Job-seekers who are not covered by the introduction act are referred by the PES to “complementary actors” who provide job-search support based on each participant's specific needs.

Key challenges

- **Job-search support** is hampered by the limited number of vacancies available through the PES. The PES is currently only informed about approximately 40% of all job vacancies.
- **Immigrants' contact** with employers is limited.
- **Introduction guides** provide heterogeneous quality of service.
- **Career guidance** is limited and not always sufficiently tailored.

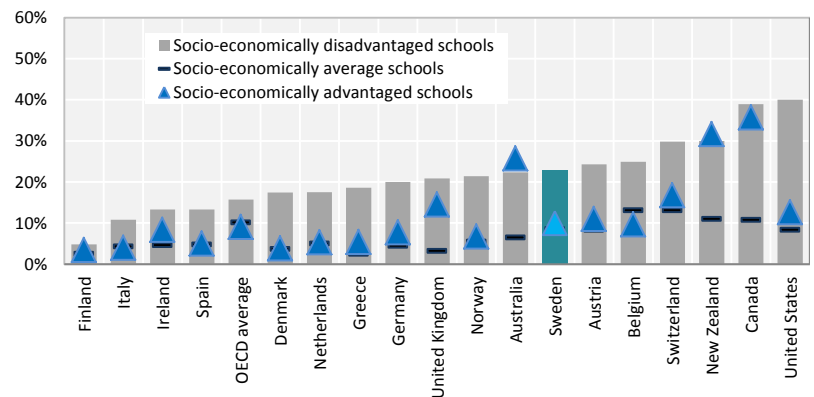
Possible directions for future policy development

1. **Introduction guide remuneration.** The PES pays a monthly remuneration to introduction guides as well as performance based component if the newcomer gets a job or starts a higher education. However, the service delivery of the some guides has been focused more on social related assistance rather than addressing the new arrivals needs for labour market related service.
2. **The dual role of introduction guides.** Guides for new arrivals are currently responsible for both providing social support activities – such as mentoring, settling in activities – as well as job-search support. These two activities are differentially suited to results-based remuneration and the unification may lead to inefficient impact on the individual's labour market outcomes.
3. **Rejection of *appropriate* offers of employment and its consequences.** Currently, introduction programme participants incur no benefit reduction if they reject a job offer. Indeed, if they accept an offer, they will have their benefit reduced (after a delay of six months). And while there is currently no data on the number of introduction programme participants that have turned down a job, from August 2014 a new regulation will oblige new arrivals with an introduction plan to accept appropriate job offers. It is important, however, to guide migrants and to give careful consideration of what constitutes an appropriate offer. This is of particular importance given that, in the current system, once in employment, migrants lose access to further PES support.
4. **Provision of individualised career advice and planning.** Career guidance and planning for the highly-educated (particularly those for whom the requirements of their first job are below their education level) can have an important long-term impact on labour market efficiency by:
 - Helping people to understand their interests, abilities and qualifications, as well as what is involved in various occupations so that they seek jobs they are likely to have a chance of obtaining, and will do well.
 - Teaching people how to assess the short- and long-term consequences of particular types of occupational choices.
 - Making information available about the labour market, about the education system and about the qualification recognition system.
 - Ensuring that the long-term goal of getting a good job is not jeopardised by taking up a lesser-skilled job.

Challenge VI. School-to-work transitions

In Sweden, 23% of students with an immigrant background attend a socio-economically disadvantaged school (one whose students' mean socio-economic status is statistically significantly below the Swedish mean). The OECD average is just over 15% (Figure 11). At the same time, data from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment show that students with an immigrant background lag those with Swedish born parents by 40 points even when controlling for socio-economic characteristics. This is equivalent of approximately a school year.

Figure 11. Proportion of students with an immigrant background attending socio-economically disadvantaged, average and advantaged schools, 2012

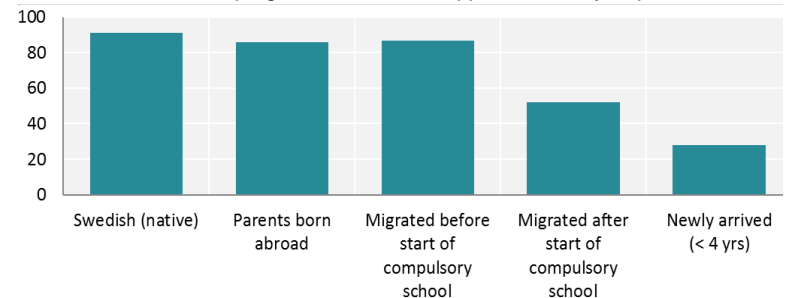


Source: OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (2012).

These disparities in educational outcomes have lasting implications for the career prospects of migrants and the children of migrants as they move from school to work. The minimum requirement for entry into upper-secondary education in Sweden is to qualify for vocational programmes, and while over 91% of native-born students achieve this minimum, the numbers are lower for those native-born students whose parents were born outside Sweden (85.8%) or those who arrived at a young age (86.6%). The proportion of young migrants who arrive after the start of compulsory school and yet manage to qualify for upper-secondary school is even lower (see Figure 12).

Furthermore, of those young migrants who successfully enter upper-secondary programmes, many still face difficulties. 10.5% of foreign-born students drop-out of upper-secondary education – compared with just 5.4% of native-born students – and a further 24.1% change programme (compared to 12.6% of native-born).

Figure 12. Percentage of students qualified for upper secondary
Qualified for vocational programmes – lowest upper-secondary requirements



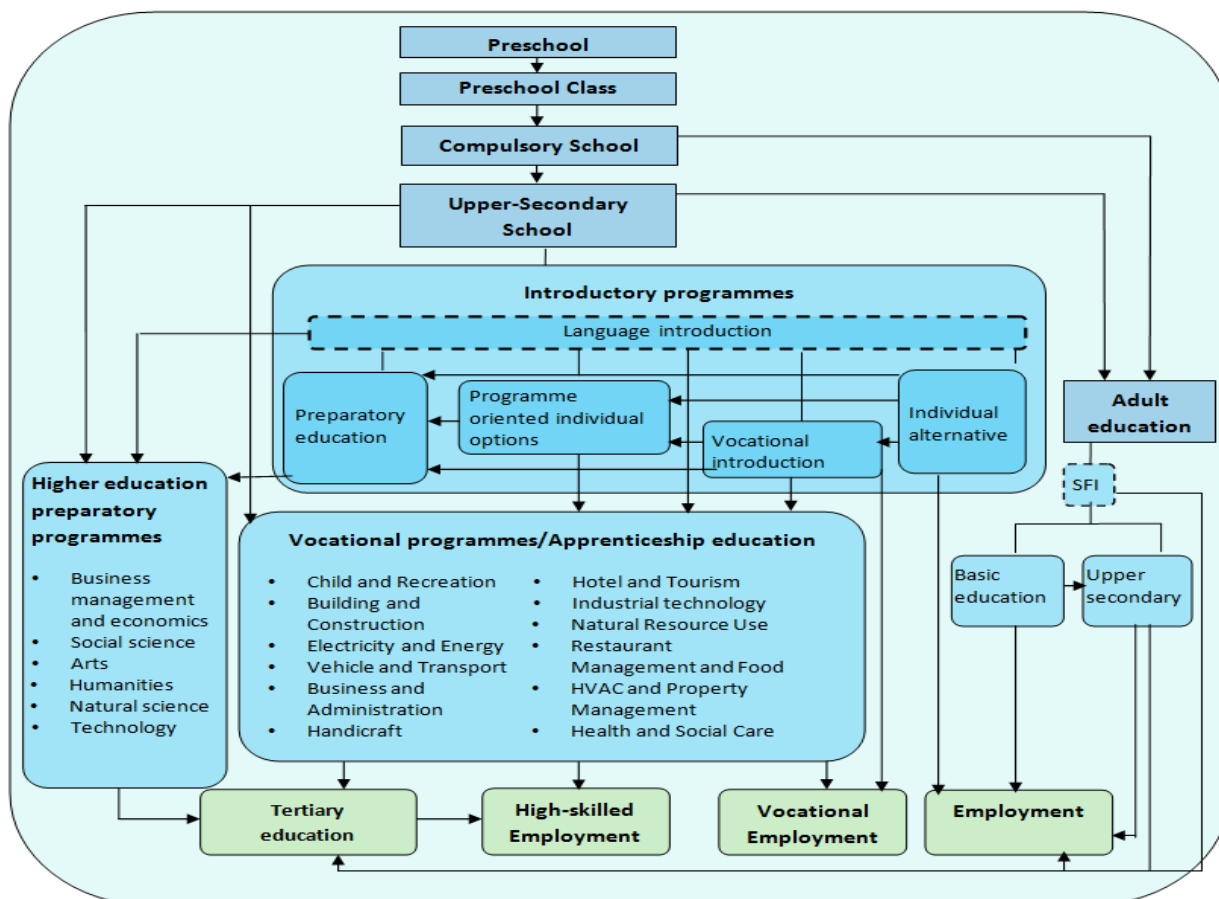
Source: National Agency for Education.

Educating young migrants in Sweden

- Upper-secondary school in Sweden consists of three components: six higher education preparatory programmes, 12 vocational programmes, and five introductory programmes (see Figure 13).
- Pupils on any programme can achieve eligibility for higher education: pupils who are not eligible for upper-secondary school, but who are considered capable of achieving eligibility within a year, are offered a preparatory year. Pupils considered to need more support are offered “Individual Alternatives” that can cover education, work experience, and guidance.
- While designed for a small number of students in temporary need of additional support, over half of “Individual Alternative” students are migrants (54%), and many fail to make progress towards upper-secondary eligibility.
- Investments planned between 2013 and 2016 aim to improve school results through extended teaching time for newly arrived pupils in primary school, building the competencies of teachers and principals, surveys of knowledge among new arrival pupils, improvements in the quality of SFI, and information on free choice of school in different languages.

High starting salaries and a relatively rigid labour market render the transition from school to work challenging in Sweden. In 2012 over 150 000 young people aged 15-24 were unemployed – with an unemployment rate approximately four times that of those aged 25-54. Gaining a foothold in the labour market can be especially challenging for young people with an immigrant background – particularly if they lack a solid educational basis.

Figure 13. Pathways from school into work



Prior to the crisis, the gap in employment rates between foreign-born youth aged 15-24 and their native-born counterparts had been closing. Since 2008, however, this trend has reversed. In 2012, with employment rates of just 30.5%, the disparity has reached 10 and 15 percentage points among men and women, respectively. In 2012, approximately 8% of the young people aged 15-24 were neither in employment, education, nor training (NEET). Foreign-born youth, particularly women, are overrepresented.

Moving into work in Sweden

- After 12 weeks in unemployment, young people aged 16-24 are referred to the job guarantee for young people which includes:
 - Phase I: job-search training and coaching for three months
 - Phase II: a work placement or short training for up to 15 months or until the young person reaches 25
- New arrivals are also eligible to follow the introduction programme from the age of 20 (or 18 if they have no parents in Sweden).

Key challenges

School outcomes are strongly linked with socio-economic background.

Regions vary in the quality of support they can offer. Peer effects and teacher expectations widen the divide and disadvantaged schools can often only attract less experienced teachers.

The “**Individual Alternative**” programme is characterised by a low outflow and often ends as a parking space for those struggling to navigate the system.

The **aspirations** of young people with a foreign background are stymied by the limited number of role models in the labour market.

Those who drop-out often struggle to find employment. Children of immigrants are over-represented in this group.

Adult education requires students to take responsibility for their own learning. This is not always appropriate for recent young arrivals who are nevertheless required to follow this route from the age of 20.

Possible directions for future policy development

1. **Recruiting, training and retaining teachers to teach in disadvantaged schools.** In many countries across the OECD, schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged children and children with an immigrant background struggle to attract and retain effective teachers. Yet, competent teachers are critical – both to build skills and aspirations.
2. **Response to the early warning signs of school failure.** Given that schools are run at the municipal level in Sweden, the ability to react to school failure remains heterogeneous across the country. While larger municipalities have the capacity to allocate their funds according to school needs, smaller municipalities are often not able to do this. The government has recently announced funding to target ten disadvantaged schools in Sweden. The initiative will focus on: providing study guidance on students in native language; providing support the school's contacts with guardians; developing additional activities to increase teaching time, and offering additional help with homework. The project has been designed to investigate effective mechanisms to combat educational inequality and scale-up those approaches found to have a positive effect. However, it is important that targeting disadvantage in the education system is built into the system and automatically targeted towards all schools that are failing.
3. **Labour market-focused career guidance from a young age.** Career guidance should be focused on labour market realities and encompass a broad range of tools including the provision of information, mentors and work experience. Up-to-date information on employment opportunities, potential returns (expected earnings and potential career paths) as well as the qualifications necessary to access certain career paths is a critical component in building aspirations and ensuring that early educational choices do not lead to a path dependency.
4. **Tackling drop-outs.** Those who leave education without basic skills are likely to struggle to find employment. Furthermore, those that leave between the age of 16 and 18 are not yet eligible for PES support and are likely to face even more difficulties. Integrating young migrants in school is a challenge, integrating them when they have left school can be more challenging still. It is important, therefore, that those who are struggling are identified early and given the necessary support.

Challenge VII. Co-ordination among integration actors

The integration of migrants – both new arrivals and those who are established in Sweden – involves a wide number of stakeholders both at the national and the municipal level. The **public employment service** is responsible for co-ordinating the introduction programme; drawing-up a customised plan; assessing and granting introduction allowance; procuring introduction guides; and organising settlement and accommodation for those migrants who are eligible for the introduction plan but who have not been able to find accommodation by themselves. There are, however, many other actors involved:

- **Municipalities** are responsible for arranging SFI, offering civic orientation, and providing access to schools and making accommodation available to PES. Municipalities are also responsible for providing childcare for newly-arrived immigrants with children (a critical pre-requisite to enable job search and work), and for providing social assistance for migrants who require it following the end of the two-year introduction period.
- The **Swedish Migration Board** is responsible for the settlement of quota refugees and new arrivals who are not entitled to an introduction programme (those asylum seekers who are resident in Migration Board facilities and have not yet been granted permits). In addition, it is responsible for the compensation to municipalities and county councils for the reception of new arrivals.
- The **county administrative boards** are in charge regarding readiness and capacity of municipalities to receive new arrivals. They sign reception agreements with municipalities, as well as bringing about a regional collaboration between municipalities.
- The **Swedish Social Insurance Agency** is responsible for the housing allowance and payment of the introduction benefit on the basis of information provided by the PES.
- **Additional agencies** are involved in the process of the recognition and validation of foreign qualifications and skills (see Challenge II).

This involvement of multiple stakeholders creates a number of challenges:

- Vertical co-operation between the central-level PES and municipalities in the settlement of migrants

While responsibility for the settlement of migrants on the introduction plan is placed with the PES, limited willingness to receive migrants on the part of some municipalities often delays this task. However, evidence suggests that early labour market access is crucial for long-term integration outcomes

- Horizontal co-ordination between the local PES and municipalities in the organisation of introduction activities

Given the large number of actors involved in the provision of introduction activities, it is essential to combine interventions effectively in order to ensure the introduction period is used efficiently. Co-ordination is particularly important in the location and scheduling of these activities as well as in their sequencing.

- The efficient provision of support for those more established in Sweden who remain outside the labour market

Municipalities pay the social assistance of those who are not eligible for the active labour market policy instruments (ALMPs) provided by the PES. As a result, many have established their own employment services in parallel. The involvement of municipalities is largely focused on the activation of those among the social assistance recipients who are not covered by the PES but the remits are not always clearly distinct. There are, however, large disparities in the level and sophistication of municipalities' involvement in providing ALMPs, as well as the degree to which they co-ordinate their actions with the local PES. Where municipal provision of ALMPs is high and co-ordination with the PES is strong, the system appears to work relatively well; in other cases, there is either a risk of duplication or of under-provision for some migrant groups – namely those not on any benefit.

Key challenges

Efficiency of introduction activities is limited by co-ordination challenges surrounding effective scheduling of SFI and PES administered activities.

Settlement delays arise as many municipalities are reluctant to host additional migrants.

Duplication of efforts between municipality labour market training for the inactive claiming social assistance, and PES support for the unemployed often provide similar support.

Possible directions for future policy development

1. **Policy co-ordination.** Prior to the reforms that placed migrant introduction under the aegis of the PES, the Integration Board played a co-ordinating role and provided guidelines to municipalities on its implementation. The PES is currently not equipped to pursue this role.
2. **Migrants on social assistance.** Municipalities are responsible for outreach to those on social assistance who are not currently seeking employment. The extent of their efforts and resources, however, differs markedly across the country. At the same time, the PES is responsible for those on social assistance who are seeking employment. These individuals are eligible for support through the “job guarantee” if they have been seeking work for more than 18 months. This arrangement means that training programmes may be duplicated. It also risks creating confusion among recipients regarding where to turn for support. Budget and procurement practices could be re-examined to address this and to facilitate the referral of individuals to appropriate programmes, whether they are run by the PES or by municipalities.
3. **Mainstream vs. project-based interventions.** Project-based interventions can be an important source of knowledge regarding what works in integration policy. To make use of this source, projects must be carefully designed, effectively evaluated and those aspects that are found to be successful must be subsequently scaled-up and firmly embedded within the integration system. Continued reliance on project financing in the longer-term impedes the projects’ ability to plan and train staff and can undermine staff motivation. In addition, resources are devoted to seeking continued finance rather than integration itself.
4. **Funding structure for migrant settlement.** The funding that municipalities are granted upon receiving migrants is calculated on the basis of estimated costs (including those involved organising reception, language tuition, civic orientation, school and pre-school for children, and welfare benefits during the first two years of introduction). These grants are often seen as insufficient to cover the costs of migrants who may not be fully integrated within the two years provided for under the introduction plan. In the budget 2013, the government announced a review regarding the rules for reimbursement to municipalities that conclude arrangements on refugee reception to initiate a performance-based compensation. It will be important to account for the fact that integration often takes longer than the 2-3 years introduction programme.

Annex A. The integration workshop

The OECD, together with the Swedish Ministry of Finance and the Swedish Ministry of Employment, hosted the first migrant integration workshop, “Finding the way: Employing the use of migrants in Sweden”, in Stockholm on the 28th of April 2014. Participants were invited to view the integration system in a holistic manner in order to identify bottlenecks and leakages – whether in policy design or implementation – and to work together to develop concrete ideas of how to tackle these challenges.

The workshop, opened by the Minister for Integration, Erik Ullenhag, and the State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Susanne Ackum, brought together a senior experts and policy makers drawn from across

- Government ministries
- Government agencies
- Social partners
- Regional and local actors

In addition, participants were joined by international experts in vertical and horizontal co-operation and co-ordination, qualification recognition and validation of skills, and employer demand for migrant skills. A full list of the participants is included below.



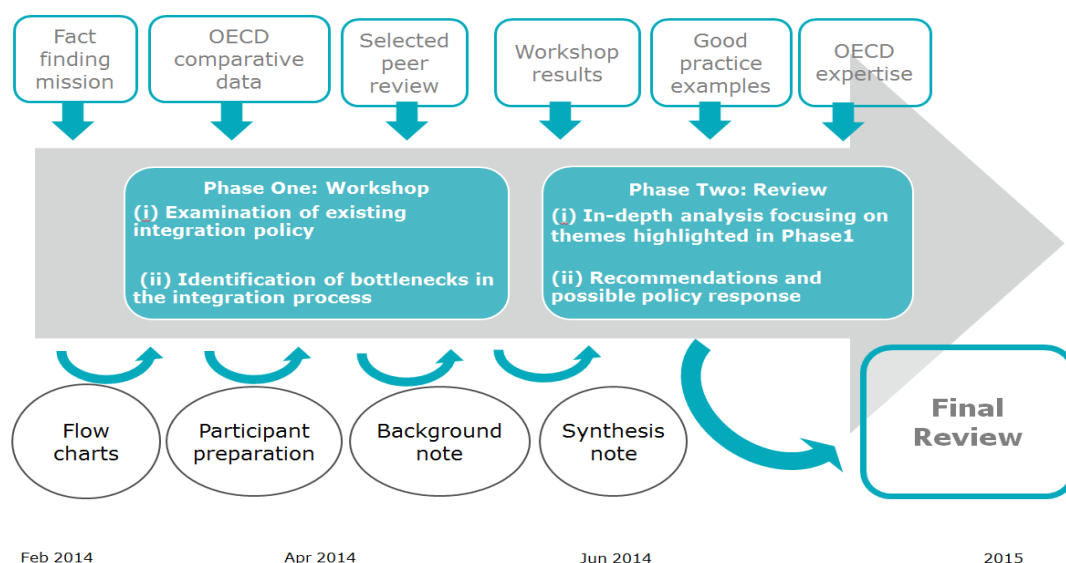
The workshop focused on seven themes, identified as critical issues facing migrants in their integration into the Swedish labour market. These include:

- I. Basic skills and Swedish language for adults
- II. Validation and recognition
- III. Employer demand
- IV. Discrimination
- V. Networks and job search
- VI. School-to-work transitions
- VII. Co-ordination among actors

Prior to the workshop, an OECD fact-finding mission took place in February 2014.

The workshop will be followed-up by a full review with concrete policy recommendations which will begin in the fourth quarter of 2014. The review will provide in-depth analysis into the selected themes outlined in this synthesis note.

Figure 14. Timeline of the project process



Participants invited to the workshop

Government Offices

Abukar Omarsson	Head of Section Division for Labour Market Issues	Ministry of Employment
Anna Schölin	Head of Section Division for Discrimination issues	Ministry of Employment
Cafer Uzunel	Senior Adviser Division for Discrimination issues	Ministry of Employment
Fredrik Bystedt	Director General Economic Affairs Department	Ministry of Finance
Gisela Waisman	Head of Section Economic Affairs Department	Ministry of Finance
Jan Norberg	Head of Section Division for Labour Market Issues	Ministry of Employment
Jan Rehnstam	Head of Section Division for Upper Secondary and Adult Education	Ministry of Education
Michael Hagos	Head of Section Division for Integration and Urban Development	Ministry of Employment
Lena Moritz	Director Economic Affairs Department	Ministry of Finance
Henry Mårtenson	Deputy Director Division for Integration and Urban Development	Ministry of Employment
Petter Bryman	Head of Section Budget Division	Ministry of Finance
Kerstin Hultgren	Senior Adviser Division for School Issues	Ministry of Education
Selma Memic	Head of Section Division for Higher education	Ministry of Education
Tommy Teljosuo	Senior Adviser Division for Integration and Urban Development	Ministry of Employment

Government Agencies

Andreas Gäfvert	Division for Service and Program Section for Employment Service	Public Employment Service
Annika Höög	Lawyer	Equality Ombudsman DO
Caroline Wieslander Blücher	Lawyer	Equality Ombudsman DO
Hans-Göran Johansson	Expert Division for Integration and Establishment	Public Employment Service
Helén Ängmo	Vice Director General	Swedish National Agency for Education
Johan Blom	Director General	Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education
Johan Nylander	Acting Operation Co-ordinator Division for Integration and Establishment	Public Employment Service
Lars Petersson	Head of Department	Swedish Council for Higher Education
Malin Rosén	Job Placement Officer	Public Employment Service
Prof. Olof Åslund	Director General	Institute for the Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU)
Petra Jansson	Head of Section Section for Youth Issues	Public Employment Service
Roger Vilhelmsson	Chief Economist	Swedish Agency for Government Employers
Somers Fry	Activities Co-ordinator, Malmö	Public Employment Service
Soledad Grafeuille	Head of Division Division for Employers	Public Employment Service
Thomas Hagman	Chief of Staff	Public Employment Service
Ulf Bengtsson	CEO	Swedish Agency for Government Employers (SAGE)
Lotta Naglitsch	Director of Education	Swedish National Agency for Education

Business Community

Anna-Lena Bohm	Chairman for SME	The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
Carina Andersson	Human Resources Manager	ATTENDO CARE
Lars Jagrén	Chief Economist	Företagarna
Melkart Afram	Vice CEO	Aksab Kemi Sverige AB

Trade Unions

Karin Perols	Researcher	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)
Pär Karlsson	Correspondent	Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO)
Susanna Holzer	Researcher	Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO)
Ulrika Vedin	Researcher	Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO)

Municipalities and County Administrative Boards

Charlotte Svensson	Head of Administration Labour Market Administration	City of Stockholm
Helena Rojas	Director Democracy, Human Rights and Inter-cultural Development	Municipality of Botkyrka
Jesper Theander	Head of Department Department for Integration and Labour Market	Malmö City
Lars Olson	Planning Manager	Municipality of Botkyrka
Susanne Tham	Quality Developer	Municipality of Södertälje
Stig-Göran Henriksson	Municipal Commissioners and Chairman for Municipal Executive Board	Municipality of Fagersta
Talieh Ashjari	Head of Division Division for Social Sustainability	County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland
Bojan Brstina	Operations Manager	Anti-discrimination bureau, Stockholm
Joe Frans		VD NGA- Nouvm
Luciano Astudillo	Vice Chairman	Uppstart Malmö

International Peer Reviewers

Stephan Schiele	Researcher	Tür an Tür – Integrationsprojekte Germany
Barbro Bakken	Director General	Department of Integration in the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion Norway
Inge Hellemans	Policy Advisor on Integration	The Agency for Home Affairs of the Flemish Authority Belgium
Hilde Lerfaldet	Senior Advisor	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Norway

OECD Secretariat

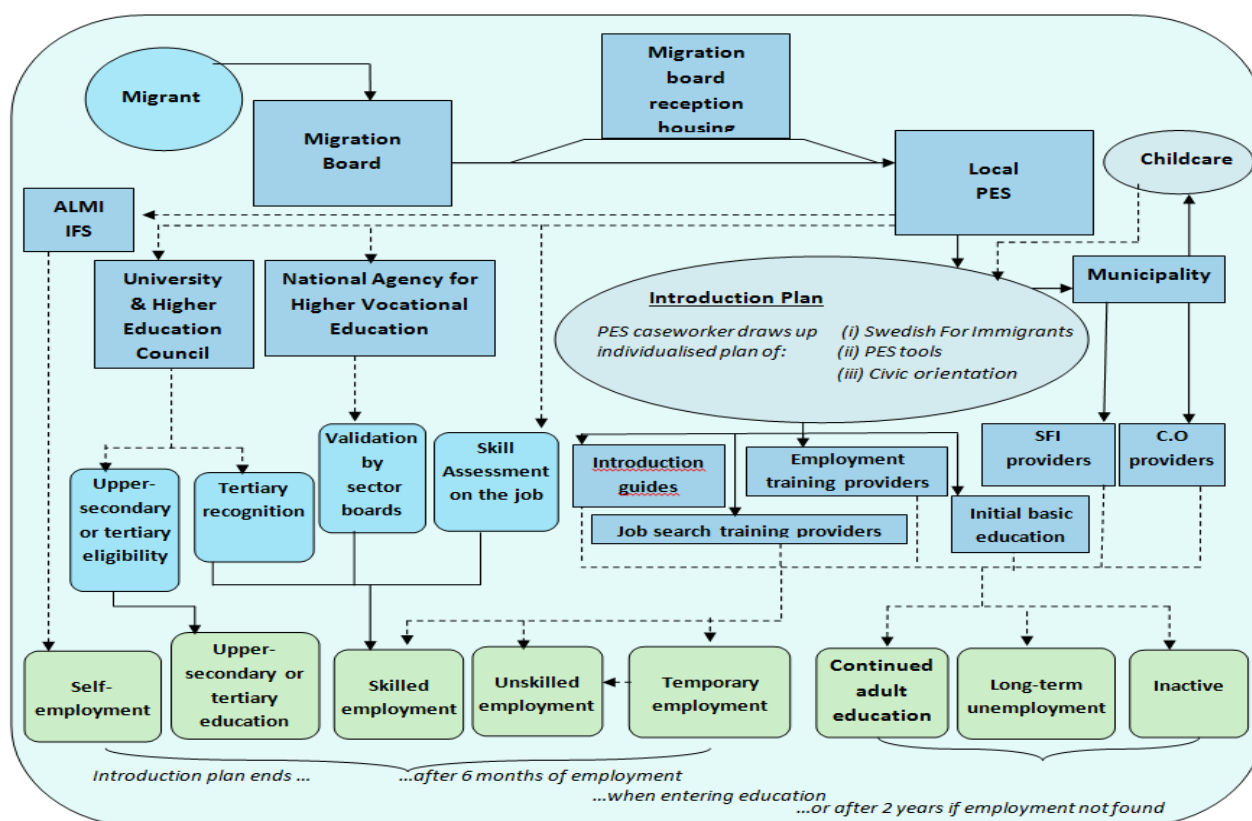
Jean-Christophe Dumont	Head of Migration Division	OECD
Thomas Liebig	Senior Administrator	OECD
Emily Farchy	Economist/Policy Analyst	OECD

Annex B. The Programme for Introduction of New Arrivals in Sweden

Introduction Policy in Sweden

- **Eligibility.** Those aged 20-64 (or aged 18-19 who do not have parents living in Sweden) who have received a residence permit as a refugee or for “refugee-like reasons” are eligible for the programme.
- **Accommodation.** The PES aims to find accommodation at a location where they consider the chances of finding work and education are good.
- **Introduction interview.** The PES (along with an interpreter if necessary) meets with beneficiaries to assess their experience, education and ambitions and, on the basis of this (as well as family circumstances and health) draws up an “introduction plan” which can last up to 24 months.
- **Introduction plan.** The plan is based upon three activities that should occupy participants on a full-time basis (40 hours):
 - Swedish for immigrants;
 - Employment preparation such as work experience and the validation of educational and professional experience;
 - Social studies, which aim to provide a basic knowledge of Swedish society.
- **Introduction benefit.** The introduction benefit is conditional on attendance and is paid, at a rate of:
 - 231 SEK (26 EUR) per day, paid twice a month, while drawing up the plan.
 - Up to 308 SEK per day, paid once a month, during plan (dependent on the extent of activities)
- **Working.** Participants who find work are able to continue to claim the introduction benefit alongside their wages for a period of six months. After this, the benefit is reduced by a proportion equal to the time spent working. In the budget bill for 2013, the government announced its intentions to introduce a regulation that obliges new arrivals with introduction plan to accept an appropriate job offer.

Figure 15. The path of a new arrival through the introduction plan



Further Information

OECD (2007), "Jobs for Immigrants. Vol 1: Labour Market Integration in Australia, Denmark, Germany and Sweden", OECD Publishing, Paris.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264033603-en>

OECD (2013) "*International Migration Outlook 2013*", OECD Publishing, Paris.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en

For further information on the OECD's work on integration:

www.oecd.org/migration

