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# Career Guidance in the Swedish School System – A Comparisons Contribution, Some Key Themes and Future Challenges

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## The base and disposition of the presentation

**The Base:** Document analysis – Resultant key themes

### **Disposition:**

- The place of Career Education in School Programs in Sweden – (Provision, Structure, Activities)
- A short historical overview – *characterizing key themes*
- Assessment of Career Guidance/Quality in Career Guidance
- Examples of Initiatives and Activities
- Future Challenges



# The place of career education in school Programs in Sweden

Table 1. *Overview of career guidance in Sweden, as presented by Euroguidance Sweden, (2015, pp. 18)*

Type of guidance service	Activities	Clients/target groups	Responsibility & administrative control
<b>Guidance in compulsory school, upper secondary school and adult education</b>	<b>Helping individuals with awareness of their own capacity and potential, creating personal goals, support in choosing the next level of education</b>	<b>Pupils in compulsory and secondary school, students in municipal adult education</b>	<b>Ministry of Education and Research SNAE Swedish School Inspectorate</b>
Municipal guidance and information centres	Guidance about studies as well as working life, Swedish for immigrants	Adults	Municipal authorities
Academic guidance services at higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance at a central level</li> <li>- Guidance at the departments</li> <li>- Career centres</li> </ul>	Students and prospective students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Education and Research</li> <li>- Swedish Higher Education Authority</li> </ul>
Guidance from the Public Employment service (418 employment offices in Sweden)	Guidance to increase the client's self-awareness and knowledge of the labour market	Jobseekers, clients in transition, special focus on vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Employment</li> <li>- Public Employment Service, head office</li> </ul>
Information through nationally funded web services	Information on education and working life, tools for self-guidance	The public	<a href="http://www.utbildningsinfo.se">www.utbildningsinfo.se</a> <a href="http://www.studera.nu">www.studera.nu</a> <a href="http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se">www.arbetsformedlingen.se</a>

**> Activities aimed at the target group (pupils) are characterized by three specific efforts...**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Performers</b>
Guidance counselling conversations	Guidance counsellors
Teaching	Guidance counsellor/Teacher
Information	Teacher/Headmaster/Guidance counsellor

## A short historical overview – Characterizing key themes

### ■ **Two perspectives:** *Society versus the Individual*

### ■ **Four Key Themes:**

1. *Distribution of Responsibility*
2. *Guidance in Broad and Narrow Sense*
3. *The Relationship between/Cooperation between Education/School – Working Life*
4. *Professionalization of the Guidance Profession*

## Assessment of career guidance/quality in career guidance

- Several reviews and evaluations of career guidance in schools have been made, during 2005 -2013.
- Following these evaluations, SNAE (Swedish National Agency for Education) formulated general guidelines for educational and vocational guidance, (later on revised).
- *A follow up* to former evaluations was recently presented (2018), alongside with a government assignment for improved Quality (2018)

# ➤ In search for a definition of quality in guidance...

- No such clear definition is offered

Quality was assessed according to the goals formulated in the documents (The Education Act, and The Curriculum)

- All evaluations (see e.g., 2007; 2013), as well as the follow up (2017) reveals the same picture:
- *Inadequate management and leadership of career guidance work in schools. Those responsible do not have sufficient knowledge about guidance, what it is or consists of, or they do not prioritize guidance.*



## ➤ Some implicit quality aspects were found:

- *The **individual** should be able to create his/her own goal for his/her future*
- *The **holder of the position** of educational- and vocational guidance counsellor shall have a proper education for the task alongside with continuous competence development*



## ➤ Some implicit quality aspects were found:

- *Educational system, labour market and working life emerges as **a necessary knowledge** area for **guidance counsellors** to manage, and for **pupils** to gain knowledge about in learning processes supported by the **guidance counsellor and others** working with guidance in it broad sense*
- *The knowledge about what guidance is shall be sufficient among all **stakeholders***



# Some examples of initiatives and activities

Table 3. Overview of courses provided by SNAE, in cooperation with several universities, in 2017:

Course	Summary of content, evaluation
<b>Migration</b> , newly arrived migrants and guidance	The participants shall raise their awareness about their own actions, behaviour and taken for granted knowledge, and gain insights about what impact this will have on the students. Intercultural perspectives on education. The evaluation shows that the course increased the participants' knowledge about multicultural guidance.
How to guide <b>newly arrived people</b>	The course is concerned with newly arrived adults, and how to work with their career planning both in class rooms and individually. The evaluation shows that the participants gained knowledge about recognition of prior learning, and increased knowledge about how to meet adults in migration.
Norm critical education for counselling – talk about working life	The course bring insights in how to better meet our own ideas about norms, and develop a norm critical approach. The course aims at highlighting one's own socially and contextually created ideas about gender, class and ethnicity. Evaluations show that the participants gained insights about how their own norms affects and influence themselves and their clients when they provide guidance.
Educational- and vocational guidance in a new era	The course aims at increasing knowledge about social media and digital guidance, as a complement to the career guidance conversational tool. Evaluation show that the participants have improved their knowledge about digital guidance.
Educational- and vocational guidance in migration – <b>Newly arrived people's transitions and inclusion</b>	The aim is to support and inspire schools and trainers to offer guidance to newly arrived people, to provide them with support in how to orientate themselves in the Swedish society, in education and working life. Participants have gained increased knowledge about the conditions of migration.
Creative guidance methods in compulsory- and upper secondary special school	This course is provided for all professionals working with pupils in these schools (educational- and vocational guidance counsellors, teachers, school leaders, counsellors, teachers in special education, and psychologists. Evaluations show how participants have received new methods to use in their daily practice.
Leadership in career guidance for groups	The course is provided for all professionals in schools working with groups, and contains knowledge about group processes, leadership and conversational abilities for leading groups. Evaluations show that the participants have received possibilities for training and reflection about themselves.
PATH-methods in guidance – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope	The course is provided for all interested in this specific method, aiming at increasing the client's belief in their own resources and abilities to influence their own future life. Participants say they have gained good knowledge of the method, and how to exercise new ways of working.
Creative leadership in process procedures for educational – and vocational guidance counsellors	<b>Strengthens and develops the role of guidance counsellors' activities in guidance in its broad sense.</b> The course shall stimulate to initiate and create project in daily practice, and to develop new ways for <b>schools to cooperate with working life.</b> The content is connected to control documents for all school levels, and SNAE: s general guidelines (Advices for educational and vocational guidance, 2013). The course has strengthened different professionals in how to organize the <b>guidance work to become the entire school's responsibility.</b>





# Some examples of initiatives and activities

Description of activities implemented/wishes for implementation	School form	Implementation	Narrow/Broad sense	Performers
<p>Informational activities, elements of teaching about school structure and environment related with the choice to upper secondary school</p> <p>Informational activities is about the conditions, how to make a choice, access to concrete, fully covered, actual, reliable and available information</p>	compulsory school	<p>Teaching/information</p> <p>Individually focused guidance counselling conversations</p> <p>Information comprise all kinds of catalogues, websites, representatives at specific activities such as exhibitions, and organized days focusing on certain themes</p>	Both broad and narrow	<p>The guidance counsellor</p> <p>Surrounding actors responsible for each specific information</p>
<p>Education/School – working life issues are mainly carried out within some weeks of PRAO (practical working life orientation). Not so much of a continuous process throughout the students' school attendance. PRAO is strongly governed, and students highlight wishes for possibilities to choose by themselves.</p>	compulsory school	<p>PRAO – the students are on practical training on different workplaces during a couple of weeks</p>	Broad	<p>Mostly the guidance counsellor, however, the ambition is to make this an issue where the whole school takes responsibility. Sometimes the assistant headmaster is responsible for this activity</p>
<p>Individually focused guidance counselling conversations</p> <p>Is not primarily focused on information, rather is the aim to support the student to explore, formulate, and to develop his/hers interest, in order to through this exploration come forward to make individually well founded choices. This activity is about the supporting process, in which the student is about to grasp his/hers interest, level, time, types of studies, work for the future. This activity is carried out as a process where the student can test, and reject alternatives with support at different stages towards a choice.</p>	compulsory school	<p>Conversations are carried out in alignment with the time for choosing to upper secondary school</p> <p>Individually focused</p>	Narrow, but with support from the broader conditions	<p>The guidance counsellor</p> <p>The guidance counsellor and the student in a learning cooperative process (authors comment).</p>

# > Some examples of initiatives and activities

Description of activities implemented/wishes for implementation	School form	Implementation	Narrow/ Broad sense	Performers
Elements of educational and vocational guidance in ordinary teaching settings. Teachers are positive to these elements; however, they work to a low extent with using examples of education and work in their teaching.	compulsory school	Elements of educational and vocational guidance	Broad	Teacher and/or guidance counsellor, who is given space on ordinary lecture time.  Teachers' don't know how to integrate these issues in their subjects, and teaching. Unclear delegation of responsibilities.
The transition between compulsory and upper secondary school must improve (2007, p. 10). The teachers in upper secondary school should not have to start all over again by identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses.	compulsory/upper secondary	Unclear who is identifying strengths and weaknesses	Narrow	Teachers and/or guidance counsellors? The cooperation between them is unclear.
Marketing of ones' own upper secondary school, the municipality's own school, at certain exhibitions (2007, p. 20). Guidance counsellors are not so satisfied with this kind of activity, as it comprise elements of marketing, which is in sharp contrast to their ethical standards of being neutral. This activity is however often imposed upon guidance counsellors, when they are hired at a specific school. Wishes are expressed for possibilities to put the students in focus, not the loyalty to the community's school. (p. 20)	compulsory school	Exhibitions, where the guidance counsellors act as representatives of the community's own school. Elements of marketing.	Broad	The guidance counsellors
The largest activity is carried out as a part of the transition towards upper secondary school. Organized visits to different schools are conducted , however the students express that these are more of marketing in its character, than quality based information about the schools and their programs	compulsory school in cooperation with upper secondary schools	Organized visits in cooperation	Broad	Several parties are involved, guidance counsellors, headmasters, teachers
Cooperation between guidance counsellors and teachers are most prominent in situations where students face difficulties in the studies and school attending in different ways.	compulsory school/upper secondary schools	Cooperation	Narrow	Teachers, guidance counsellors, students and other relevant parts depending on the issue.



# Some future challenges

## Quality in guidance must be defined, clarified and operationalized;

1. Define guidance, what it is and consists of related to the professions' core mission and work; guidance in narrow sense/guidance in broad sense
2. Define and clarify the parts and the roles of a shared division of responsibility both inter-organizationally and outer-organizationally
3. Define career guidance as an educational task and pedagogical mission:  
***guidance counsellors as enhancers for learning***
4. *To sufficiently assess guidance: clarify **WHAT** quality in guidance really means, what does quality consist of, and from **WHOSE perspective** do we evaluate quality*



## Define quality from the perspectives of the different parties involved;

- The pupils' perspective
- The guidance counsellors' perspective
- The principals'/headmasters'/leaders' organizers' and decisions makers' perspective
- The teachers' perspective
- Stakeholders' representing the labour market and working life perspective



# Bridging the gap:

*By clarifying responsibilities, perspectives, roles and functions to strengthen cooperation*





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## Thank You for Your Attention!

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