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Adult education,lifelong learning, community outreach and ICT in Sweden

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Published in:
THE ALPINE MANUAL OF GOOD PRACTICE (ebook)

2003

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Ossiannilsson, E. (2003). Adult education,lifelong learning, community outreach and ICT in Sweden. In R. Mark (Ed.), *THE ALPINE MANUAL OF GOOD PRACTICE (ebook)* (pp. 1-14). Alpine, Queens University, UK.

Total number of authors:
1

Office for Continuing and Distance Education

Adult education, lifelong learning, community outreach* and ICT in Sweden

(Report for the Grundtvig Alpine project 87515-CP-1-2000-1-UK-Grundtvig-ADU, 2003)

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* Concerning Community outreach there is a separate paper, Lund University, Sweden and Community outreach by Ebba Ossiannilsson, Project Manager, OCDE, Lund University, Sweden 030305©

SUMMARY

Adult education in Sweden is extensive, based on a long tradition and range from higher education to non-formal popular education. Swedish adult education is highly decentralised and autonomous. As a general principle, adult education is free of charge for the learners and financed by the public budget.

The Swedish perspectives takes it's starting point from the initiatives of OECD, the European Commission, the Northern eDimension and the Swedish government. Concerning ICT, the infrastructure and high degree of development is reflected everything from the road and highway network, the railroads and other transportation systems to IT, a field in which Sweden is sometimes classified as the most developed nation in the world. In 2001 we got a new Government Bill, The Open University with guidelines for all HEI in the country. This is the government's suggestion for taking measures to widen recruitment and to open doors for several different ways to Universities. Activities in the Bill are: *Changes in the law,* a *special recruitment delegation,* stimulation of *local activity plans, a widen base year education, college education, real competence, alternative selection(10% of the admissions capacity), flexible learning, distributed learning, prosecute education on mission*, even from customers outside the *EES-region* and The Swedish Net University. The einitiatives in Sweden follow the concept by Taylor (2003) the "Fifth Generation Distance Education". Professional organizational bodies which co-operate with Universities are ITIS, NADE, NiTUS, and UR.

INTRODUCTION

This paper takes an overview over the papers and initiatives from OECD (1998) the European Commission http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/index.html, http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/elearning/summit.pdf, Memorandum on lifelong learning (2000) eLearning Action Plan (2002), Communication from the Commission-Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality (2001), Collis and Wende (2002) and www.elearningeuropa.info. The Swedish perspectives www.regeringen.se, www.si.se, www.scb.se, www.folkbildning.sewww.cfl.se, www.netuniversity.se, www.skolverket.se, www.ky.se and some examples from Lund University, SE www.lu.se are summarized in the following paper.

Northern eDimension

Information and communication technology, ICT will play a crucial role in the development of a prosperous and sustainable Northern region. The Northern

eDimension offers a platform helping to accelerate the transition to the information society in the region through closer co-operation and integration, this is however a challenge, due to the complexities of the region. The Northern eDimension Action Plan (NeDAP) will serve as a tool for enhancing the development in the region. The objectives are following; to accelerate the northern regions transition to the information society, to ensure greater co-operation and integration amongst the states comprised of the Northern dimension, to improve the environment for initiatives and investments-especially in north West Russia and the candidates countries and to fuel the implementation of a sound and harmonised regulatory framework. Those will be the overall objectives, having in mind a knowledge-based information society for all, the most important resource to challenge and foster is the creative individual (NeDAP, 2001). The mission of the NeDAP was inspired by the message from the Heads of Government at the Kolding Meeting, April 2000, where also the Heads of Governments requested initiatives aiming to develop and strengthen the Baltic Sea Regions already leading position in ICT in general.

Sweden

The population of Sweden is 9 million inhabitants. The official language is Swedish but recognized minority languages are Sami (Lapp), Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish), Yiddish and Romani Chib (a Gypsy language).
Some fact and figures about Sweden:

Area: 450,000 km² (174,000 sq. mi.), third largest country in Western Europe
Forests:53%
Mountains:17%
Cultivatedland:8%
Lakesandrivers:9%
Longestnorth-southdistance:1,574km(978mi.)
Longest east-west distance: 499 km (310 mi.)

Sweden is a large country with long distances, a comparatively small population and a sometimes severe winter climate. During the 20th century, when Sweden was transformed in record time from a backward agrarian country into one of the world's strongest, most advanced industrial nations, there were thus heavy demands for infrastructure, transportation, communications and technological development. This background is one explanation for Sweden's sophisticated infrastructure and high degree of technological maturity today.

Looking at infrastructure, this high degree of development is reflected in everything from the road and highway network, the railroads and other transportation systems to IT, a field in which Sweden is sometimes classified as the most developed nation in the world.

One of the many eloquent indications of Sweden's internationally recognized speed in adopting new technology is that in 1900, Stockholm had more telephones - in absolute numbers - than London, Paris or Berlin. Sweden and the Swedish people have become so famous for their openness to new technology, new trends and patterns of behaviour and consumption that to a growing extent, the country has come to be used as a test market by major multinational corporations in the development of new products and services. Sweden is in 2003 ranked for the second year as no1 for highest IT accessibility for individual inhabitants ands also IT used at work places. Also during the five latest years Sweden has been ranked among the five countries with highest accessibility (http://naring.regeringen.se/index.htm, www.sverige.se, http://www.sika-institute.se/utgivning/ars_ikt03sv.pdf, www.elearningeuropa.info).

All the initiatives from the Commission and even beyond, described above are on the agenda for initiatives and strategies for the ministries involved in lifelong learning and the eInitiatives in Sweden. In 2001 we got a new Government Bill, The Open University (Den Öppna Högskolan 2001/02:15) this is directives and guidelines for all HEI in the country. Also the 15 quality indicators set up by the Commission (http://europa.eu.int/comm./education/elearning/summit in the following four areas; 1, skills, competence and attitudes, 2. access and participation, 3. resources for lifelong learning and 4. strategy and system development are on the governments agenda for a sustainable society and for strategic development for the country. The einitiatives in Sweden follow the concept by Taylor (2003) the "Fifth Generation Distance Education".

Adult education in Sweden

Adult education in Sweden is extensive and based on a long tradition, and range from higher education to non-formal popular education. Although rich in variation and consisting of a large number of organisations it has some common principles. Swedish adult education is highly decentralised and autonomous. Responsibility and decision making is carried out by institutions, municipalities and local organisations. As a general principle, adult education is free of charge for the learner and financed by the public budget (study organisations may charge participant feee). Students and learners are offered financial assistance in form of grants and loans, in order to facilitate their studies.

Facts and figures:

Higher education: 13 universities, 16 university colleges, 300 000 students per semester SEK44 billion (€4.8 billion).
Municipal adult education: 419 schools in 280 municipalities, 300 000 students per year.
Liberal Adult Education: 147 folk highe schools, 100 000 participants per semester in folk high school courses, 11 natioanl study associations with 900 local units, 1.5 -2 million participants per year in study circles, SEK 2.5 billion (€272 million
Advanced Vocational Education: 180 educational providers offering 330 courses (year2001), 11 000 participants, SEK 55 million (€6 million).
(Made in Sweden, 2002).

The Open University and the summary of the Government Bill, Sweden

The Open University in Sweden are distinguished by an international competitive quality and active work with a widen recruitment. The Government Bill "The open University "(Den Öppna Högskolan 2001/02:15) is the government's suggestion for taking measures to widen recruitment and to open doors for several different ways to Universities. The Open University presume that all human beings are treated in an equal way and that discrimination doesn't exist. Pedagogic and didactic renewals have to be promoted and Universities have to offer education, which are better adapted for more students with varying background and experiences. The conditions for lifelong learning must be improved. The Open University must be open to the surrounding world.

Education and research is the major force for a society's modernisation and renewal. Education gets a more and more central signification for welfare, expansion and development. Education widen views, contribute to personal development and gives better conditions to face our times great challenges and rapid changes in living conditions. Education is a question of vital importance to fortify democracy and to

balance differences concerning allocation of welfare, influence and possibilities to active participation in society. Education, which face high raised quality demands are of most importance for the single human beings development and possibilities in the future (ibid).

All people's right to knowledge and development is with that background described above starting point for the government's politic strategy. The knowledge society shall be open to everyone. This is the great welfare political task in the future. University and higher education must be a force for social changes (ibid.).

Recruitment for higher education must increase, become balanced and widen to newer groups. The number of youths, who enter Universities, must increase. The government's goal is that 50% of an age group shall enter Universities at 25 years age. An open University welcome everyone no matter of background, living place, gender, ethnic background or disability. This manifoldness, which is in society, has to a higher extent, to be reflected at Universities (ibid.).

Following paragraphs are stated in the government bill (Den Öppna Högskolan 2001/02:15):

Widen recruitment and new ways to Universities:
Changes in the law, it will be a special paragraph in the Higher Education Act. The new text will be "Universities shall even promote and widen recruitment to Universities"

A *special delegation* will be established, which task will be to stimulate *recruitment activities*. For the years 2002-2004 the government will allocate 40 million SEK (appr. 4 million Euro) a year, a total budget of 120 million SEK (appr. 12 million euro).

Universities shall establish *local activity plans* with measurable objectives how activities with widen recruitment of students shall be carried out.

A widen base year education. This has already with great success been used in the area of science and technique subjects. The education shall, as it is today meet students who are lacking the special qualifications for the actual education.

College education will be introduced. A co-operation with KomVux (Local Authority Administered Adult Education (Municipal adult education). The education will be 20 weeks as part of high school and to the highest-level 30 ECTS. The education aims to strengthen the students' knowledge base and qualifications.

Real competence. The government also promote the new role of Universities, the role to stimulate lifelong learning, for example to stimulate judgment of real competence for qualification for higher education and even to state in the Higher Education Ordinance that real competence is adequate as well for qualification for higher education. Universities have to develop methods for judgment of competence, besides the formal educational system.

Alternative selection. The Government suggests that Universities themselves ought to get the possibility to decide themselves which kind of *selection criteria*, shall be used up to a limit of *10% of the admissions capacity*.

From 2002 there is also a new organization for *flexible learning* www.cfl.se, aiming to co-ordinate, stimulates and promote all flexible learning (the old organization was the National School for Adults).

New forms for *distributed learning* and also new alternatives for education will stimulate and promote possibilities for lifelong learning.

Universities will also, without the government's admission, get possibilities to *prosecute education on mission*, even from customers outside the *EES-region*.

The Universities role in lifelong learning

Commissioned education (In Swedish: uppdragsutbildning), which Universities organize, is according to the government's judgment an important instrument to strengthen the role of the University in the lifelong learning process. Universities have to be more active in their work to provide commissioned education (Den Öppna högskolan 2001, Lundgren and Liljevall, 2001, SUHF 2001). The financing systems, organization and regulatory systems have to be improved.

The government considers that there are needs for a policy and uniting function, which has insight and has a general view over the Universities commissioned education, the aim is to expand the actions in volume and to strengthen the legibility towards the Universities ordinary students, but also towards potential customers. Lund University has recently in year 2000, set up a University-owned enterprise to commission UCE, Lund University Education AB (LUEAB, 2001, www.education.lu.se). The same idea has been developed structured at the Karolinska Institute, KI, Karolinska Education AB in Stockholm. http://www.karolinskaeducation.ki.se/services/courses_seminars_se.html

Ratio, concerning lifelong learning in higher education
Lifelong learning is an important part of the strategy for active citizenship, high employment and economic expansion. The national agency ought to develop rates, which describe the development of the Universities role concerning lifelong learning.

Doctoral students' posts. There will be new possibilities for doctoral students, to study on part-time and also for *students at Licentiate degree, to be enrolled in research study programmes.*

Pedagogical renewal

The Government also states different commitments for renewal of the pedagogic in higher education, as well as organization and structure. Also all lecturers enrolled in higher education will have a formal pedagogic education as well as in ICT and ICT/netpedagogy.

Objectives for higher education

The objectives for higher education in the Higher Education Act will be reformulated to better face the extended demands on different skills in the society and working life of today. Objectives as; skills for making independent and critical judgments, skills for independent selection, formulating and problem-solving, preparedness to meet changes in working life, skills for research and estimate knowledge on a scientific level, skills to follow the knowledge development, skills for knowledge-exchange with persons/organizations without special knowledge concerning the subject.

The Swedish Net University

The Swedish Net University was established in March 2002. All net courses from all of the Swedish Universities will be co-coordinated from the The Swedish Net University. One of the main purposes is to influence new groups of individuals to start studying. The Swedish Net University is more described on p.6.

New educational alternatives

Shorter vocational higher education. There is a need in society for well-educated persons on different levels. Shorter vocational higher education with an explicit vocationally oriented will recruit students from more study unfamiliar environments to a higher extent than other higher education studies.

New Master exam. There will be a new Master exam with combinations of studies (widening concerning subjects).

Equality of students

Equality of students in higher education, concerning gender, age, ethnic, sexual disposition, disabilities and social background will be of high priority.

The government also estimates that there will be a stronger concentration on *additional courses for immigrants* with foreign higher education qualifications.

Increased International mobility

The wider perspective of internationalization as mobility activities will also promote recruitment to higher education. Sweden will also through different activities promote and stimulate recruitment of foreign students.

The Authority for the Swedish Net University

The development of distributed education (net courses) started to a high extent around 1995 and has resulted in several initiatives (SOU, 1998, SOU 2001, The Government Bill 2001/02:15, The Authority for the Swedish Net University, 2001:91, Den Öppna högskolan 2001, Budgetpropositionen 2002).

The Swedish government recently decided to set up the Swedish Net University as a dual or multi-modal university based upon the courses and education already given by the Swedish universities and university colleges, for the moment 33 HEI out of 49. As an initial incentive, these institutes of higher education will be given an extra disbursement (totally 160 million SEK for year 2003) from the government, for courses given within the Swedish Net University. The disbursement was 211 million SEK last year. Participation within the Net University is voluntary for the universities and university colleges. However, most universities will participate, and offer a wider range of courses than those supported by the extra stimulation resources. The Swedish Net University is planned to be a strong brand name for Swedish distance education provided by Swedish universities

The Swedish Net University mainly aims at widening the distance education market in Sweden.

In order to run the project the Swedish Net University Agency (located in Härnösand in the geographical middle of Sweden) has been started. The primary task for the agency is to co-ordinate the different courses and education given by the various Swedish universities. The agency has an annual budget of about 35 million SEK.

Most of this funding will be used for different purposes such as stimulating improvements in skills and competence among distance education teachers and other personnel. It will also be used to identify topics and areas that would benefit from more distance education. Furthermore the agency runs and develops the web-based platform where the Swedish Net University and its courses are presented. (www.netuniversity.se)

Distributed learning/distance learning/net learning
The role of distributed distance learning in UCE will by no doubt become increasingly important in the coming years. The use of ICT will also bring regular courses closer to non-regular courses used for UCE and vice versa. The Net University is likely to be a crucial step in the future development of ICT in Sweden. (Borg 1999, e-Learning-Designing of Tomorrows Education 2001, Holmes 2001, Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet (The authority for the Swedish Net University 2001,2002, Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet (The authority for the Swedish Net University) 2002, Björk 2002).

Recently a study was carried out (Björk, 2002), made from Distum, to describe some good examples from three Universities in Sweden, Lund University, Blekinge Technical University and Umeå University.

Wigforss & Badersten (2002) described in a study some indicators of best practice for delivery online learning. Söderberg & Anderberg, (2001) specially describe good result with online learning for groups with different kind of disabilities. Studies by Stöpfgeshoff (2002) describe 15 examples/portrait concerning life and distance studies and found that distance learning enrich life in several ways for people who otherwise never could study and get access to higher education on Campus.

Computers and web-based learning etc. can be described in model with following circles the inner circle refers to 1.computer based learning, the next will be 2. web-based learning, the third 3. e Learning and the biggest and the outermost circle refers to 4. distance learning.
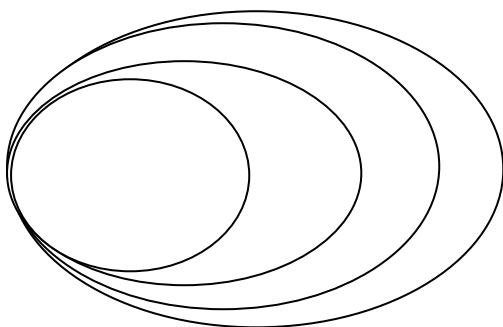

Fig 1. The figure illustrate different levels of ICT

Critical Success factors for web-based learning/e-Learning
Khakhar (WBLE 2nd 2001) stress the development of a structures framework and emphasize some critical success factors for e-learning, such as Policy issues, both

national and institutional, Managerial issues, Ethics, Culture, Social aspects and Language, Course development and maintenance, Design and delivery issues and Technological issues. Also Lindquist (WBLE 2nd 2001) emphasize similar and describe as following; Modalities for learning service provision, framework for knowledge management, making knowledge/learning more accessible to managers and exploring quality standards for learning. Poumay et al (WBLE 2nd 2001) summarize also some critical success factors such as support, training and regulation.

In an international study, carried out by Collis & van der Wende (2002) also some critical issues and scenarios became explicit. One general conclusion was that change is slow, and not radical, the other one was that ICT in teaching and learning is widespread but part of a blend, the final one was that instructors are doing more, but with no reward.

Some organisational bodies:
ITiS, Delegation for ICT in Schools
ITiS is a national action program for ICT in schools, which aims to improve the schools´ infrastructure and accessibility to the Internet and mail and to give teachers better pedagogical opportunities to use ICT in their work. (www.regeringen.se).

NITUS, The Network for ICT-based education through local study centres
NITUS was established in June 1996 to promote and support the creation of a network for co-operation in higher level distance education. The expansion of local study centres in Sweden during the last few years indicates the importance of accessibility to HE perceived by local governments. Today NITUS is made up over 100 municipalities in Sweden and Finland (Made in Sweden , 2002, **www.nitus.org**).

SADE, The Swedish Association for Distance Education
The Swedish Association for Distance Education is an interest organisation for key actors in distance and flexible learning. SADE counts among its members representatives from universities and secondary schools as well as from companies. Organisations and public bodies **www.sverd.org**.

UR, The Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company
UR, the Swedish Educatioanl Broadcasting Company, has a specific mandate to produce and broadcast educational programmes as one of three companies with the Swedish public service broadcasting system. Presently, about 10 000 UR radio and TV programmes are available at audio-visual centres throughout Sweden and at many public libraries. www.ur.se

Lund University, SE
Lund University (LU), with seven faculties and a number of research centers and specialized institutes, is the largest unit for research and higher education in Sweden and also in Scandinavia. The main part of the university is situated in Lund, but a number of departments for research and education are located in Malmö and Helsingborg.

Lund University was founded in 1666, partly in order to knit the provinces which had been ceded by Denmark in 1658 closer to Sweden. Since then, the University has developed into a modern international centre for research and higher education. At present, more than 34 000 students are enrolled at Lund University and altogether some 6000 people are employed.

With over 350 departments and centers LU offer a large variety of courses. Some figures about LU; a University with 34 500 Students, 3066 Postgraduate Students, 80 Educational Programmes, 1000 Courses , 8 International Master Programmes and 6500 Staff. All courses are more or less even for so called outreach students, especially as many of the courses are available on the net. LU offer both ordinary courses and courses on commission (Swedish, uppdragsutbildning).

In response to the initiatives mentioned above both from the commission and from the Swedish government, Lund University recognises that a highly important aspect of the university's contact with the world outside is competence development for professionals' www.lu.se/info/stretegiskplan.

Lund University is one of Sweden's oldest Universities, with old traditions and also very well established on international base both for research and undergraduate courses. In year 1994 two important offices was established, Office for Continuing and Distance Education (OCDE) and Centre for Information Technology in Education (CITU). Those two units together with the vice-chancellors and the Boards engagement for web-based learning and e-Learning both for regular education as well as for Continuing Education has been has been crucial for the development in the area and Lund University is also launched as an e-University (Björck 2002).

The 3rd mission for the Universities is of high priority. To provide comprehensive service and support a special office has been established at Lund University, the Office for Continuing and Distance Education (OCDE). A specialised education company, Lund Education AB www.education.lu.se, has also been set up according to The Open University (Den Öppna högskolan 2001), primarily to contract teaching to companies, public authorities and organisations.

Policy regarding training and higher education

To meet the demand for continuing and market-driven education a considerable development has taken place. This comprises in part the establishment of a support organization for web-based education, "Lundamodellen" fig 1, and the development of a large number of projects within competence development, which have been carried through in partnership with various partners, both national and international www.fov.lu.se.

The University's board has established a policy for training, higher education and competence development. The policy emphasizes the following infrastructure; Lifelong Learning is a prioritised area, Flexibility and customer-awareness, Contribution to quality development, establishment of an Education Company, develop and strengthen Alliances and cooperation both nationally and internationally. A special tool- a learning management system- is also developed, LUVIT (Lund University Virtual Interactive Tool), www.Luvit.com.

Distributed learning

Within Lund University over 250 web-based distance-courses are operational. These courses are aimed primarily at professionals or people who for various reasons cannot actually be in Lund. These web-based courses are available in most disciplines, including the humanities, law, medicine, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and engineering. Lund Net University (www.fov.lu.se) was established to follow the directives concerning the Swedish Net University also a special infrastructure for

strategy development, implementation and support was set up. Lund University Online will follow as well for international students.

Support resources through a Helpdesk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year is the inner wheel of the support system. Swedish students and teachers are well equipped, every student gets access to the net and also support for buying computers Quality Assurance on all levels is build-in in the structure for running Lund Net University.

Lund University also provides education at local study centres
http://www.campus.hbg.lu.se/utbildning/lokalastudiecentra.html
across the county of Skåne. Here participants in the courses receive the help needed to use computers as support in their education and to follow courses given via video presentations.
For the coming year 20 millions SEK will be allocated to local learning centres in Sweden.

Lund University work on a Dual-mode base and the different learning models, Wigforss (2000) carried out a study concerning development and Quality Assurance of Internet based distance education. 24 courses were estimated. Developmental factors, process factors and result factors were studied, similar critical success factors as has been mentioned from several studies mentioned above.

Learning Lund and Centre for Education and Learning (UCLU)

Advancing into active learning and promoting student motivation, interest and activity, Lund University focuses on Learning Lund and Centre for Education and Learning (UCLU). Learning Lund and UCLU merges pedagogy, pedagogic ICT and networking for learners. Those centres emphasises insight through individual, collaborative and teacher-coached learning. The centres strive to unify the best values of campus and distance activities. For campus and distance studies alike, e-based didactic rooms support information identification and evaluation, modelling, simulation and visualisation with adaptive systems promoting flexible learning.

Lund University is co-ordinating and/or participating in several international and EU projects concerning different eInitiatives and regional development projects such as the Universitas 21, EQUAL, NETTLE, the R3L initiative_CoLab, eCompete, BSVC, E-GIS, and eLearning Öresund www.fov.lu.lse
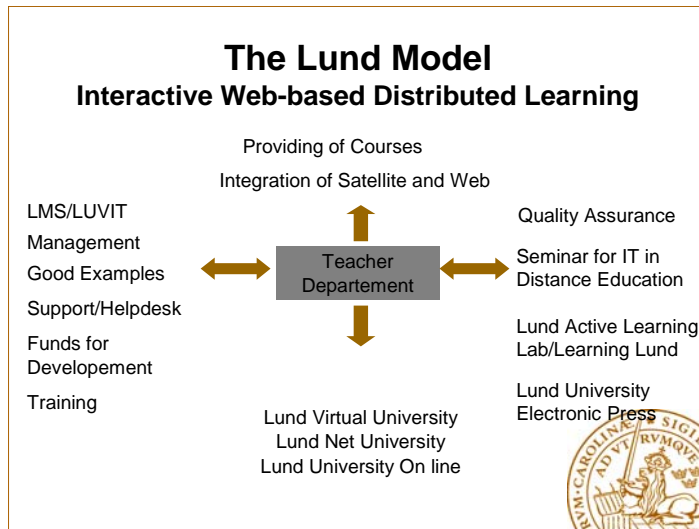
Fig. 1. The Lund Model

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