

# How do Local Governments Work to Reduce the Negative Effects of Segregation?

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In the autumn of 2012 the Swedish schools inspectorate implements a quality audit where the purpose is to find out “If the local Government work to reduce the negative effects of segregation in pre-school, compulsory schools and after-school”.

There are three under questions:

1. Does the local Government allocate the resources out of principals that take into account socio-economic impacts?
2. Does the local government evaluate the resource allocation out of goals for the education on both school and activity level?
3. Does the local government take any action in any other way than with the allocated resources to prevent and reduce the negative effects of disadvantaged schools and preschools?

To know what to look at the central concept Negative effects of segregation is defined by *Those negative effects means that the pupil's socioeconomic background and the fact that they have arrived late to Sweden have of the school result. There is research that tells that there are two factors that have great impact of the pupil's results, the friend effect and the expectation of the teachers.*

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## I. Legal background

In the Swedish school law it is written that the education shall “compensate for differences in children’s and students’ ability to accrue to the education” and “the access to the education shall be the same, independent of geographic, social or economic circumstances”. The education shall also take account of children and pupils different conditions and needs.

A knowledge survey, from The Swedish National Agency for Education (2009), shows that one of the most important issues that make the school results different is segregation between schools. It also point out that the pupils socioeconomic background has a bigger impact which means that the schools has been less successful on their assignment to compensate the differences in the children’s and pupils possibilities to utilize the education.

Research also shows that there is a clear “friend effect” which means that a pupil is influenced in the social development and knowledge by the surroundings. The pupils –despite the background of their own – that participate in schools and classes where there is a high proportions of high educated parents tend to achieve better than the pupils – despite background – that participate in schools where the parents have a high proportion of low educated parents.

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## II. Historical background

The Swedish school has been decentralized from the 1970's and forward. This means that the power and responsibility for the schools is more and more given to the communities and to the schools. From the beginning of 1990th and forward there have been several reforms in the educational system. There is a pattern from decentralization to marketization like in other countries. The local communities got a bigger responsibility, pupils and parents got bigger possibility to select which school to attend and private schools have the same finances as municipal schools. At the same time there was a new curriculum that gave the school principal and the teachers more freedom concerning how to teach and what to teach. Another effect of municipalization was that the local communities got undivided responsibility for all school leaders and teachers.

The purpose of this reform was to give better conditions to choose, better adjustment to local conditions and better possibility to adjust the education concerning what the parents and pupils wanted.

It was also meant to create better possibility for the schools to adjust the schools after the needs of the pupils.

The first PISA-study (2001) showed that the Swedish school system was a School system with a high level of equality in comparison to other countries in OECD. The following PISA-studies in 2003 and 2006 showed that the difference between schools in Sweden was still low but slowly increasing. In 2006 there was a report by The Swedish National Agency for Education that confirmed that Swedish schools are more and more segregated. This development has also been confirmed by both reports from The Swedish National Agency for Education and from PISA in 2009.

## III. The situation in Sweden today

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One of the actions from the Government to take more responsibility of the schools is to establish a new authority. The 1th October 2008, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate was starting its activities. Before this was an assignment of The Swedish National Agency for Education but now it is two authorities. The Swedish Riksdag and the Government set out the goals and guidelines for the preschool and school through i.e. the Education Act and the Curricula. The mission of the Agency is to actively work for the attainment of the goals.

The role of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is to monitor and scrutinize. In connection with these supervisory and quality auditing activities, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate provides advice and guidance as to what a school needs to rectify on the basis of the requirements of legislation.

The Swedish schools Inspectorate annual makes a report of the experiences and result from the regular supervision and quality audits from 2011 shows that there are problems with the schools actives. (En skola med tillit lyfter alla elever, 2011).

Example of fails from the report:

- A majority of the Swedish schools is failing concerning knowledge results.
- In almost all activities the schools fail concerning individualization.
- The teachers have low expectation of the pupils which can lead to that the teaching is limited and unjustified.
- Many schools don't have enough knowledge to support children with special needs.
- Many schools fail in their information to pupils and parents concerning the pupils learning and social development.

This is the background of the quality audit to find out more about how the municipalities work to lower the effects of segregation.

## V. Indicators to find how the local communities work

To find out how the municipalities work the Swedish Schools Inspectorate will perform a quality audit in 2012/2013 about “If the local Government work to reduce the negative effects of segregation in pre-school, compulsory schools and after-school”. We will visit and investigate 30 local governments to find out how they work. To answer these questions:

1. Does the local Government allocate the resources out of principals that take into account socio-economic impacts?
2. Does the local government evaluate the resource allocation out of goals for the education on both school and activity level?
3. Does the local government take any action in any other way than with the allocated resources to prevent and reduce the negative effects of vulnerable schools and preschools?

To answer the questions different indicators had been defined to find out how it works in the different municipalities:

The indicator of the first question is about how the local communities assign resources to the different activities as pre-school, compulsory school, special support, and native language support to find out what considerations they make. The focus is if they counteract the negative effects of segregation. The indicator of the second question is about how the local communities evaluate the assignment of resources. Do they follow up if the resources is given to right activities concerning to give the children the best conditions for getting good results? Do they find what effect there is on the negative effects of segregation? The indicator of the third question is to find out if the local government takes any other actions (beside economical resources) to counteract the negative effects of segregation. Ex Have they consider any actions to change organization to create better conditions or actions concerning teacher skills?

## VI. Result

The audit of the 30 local governments is implemented during the autumn 2012 so there are no results yet. At the ELA second World Conference on right to education there will be presented both good examples of what local communities do to give good conditions for pupils and what local communities need to improve after our audit.

## VII. Referensers

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